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A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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Are You Tired of Being Tired?

See Page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

An Election Unlike Any Other

The first time it happened, I was pleasantly surprised. By now, I've come to expect it. "Keith," a friend will say, "I've never voted for a Democratic Presidential candidate in my life. And I was sure I never would. But this year, I'm voting for Governor Clinton."

I honestly can't remember how many times I've now had this kind of exchange with Association members around the country. In my visits with you—in Indianola, Iowa, and Casper, Wyoming, and Denver, Colorado, and so many other places—I've found it hard to believe how many of you who are proud and devoted Republican activists have told me that you'll vote for Bill Clinton. And many of you have mentioned feeling torn and "stretched"—working to help elect Republican candidates at the local level while churning up state-level support for the Clinton/Gore team.

These experiences have helped me get a handle on the dynamics of the 1992 presidential campaign. What I'm beginning to suspect is that the Clinton/Bush contest, more than any other presidential election in memory, has made the labels Republican and Democrat irrelevant.

This oddity might best be explained by the fact that George Bush's ideological stance—on everything from the economy to health care to equality of opportunity—derives from his conviction that education ought to be understood not as a right for all, but as a privilege for the few.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

Consider: Just last year, the Bush Administration issued a proposal that would permit $6.2 billion in Chapter 1 funds to be used as vouchers at private schools, remove $530 million dollars from the public treasury as a gift to private and parochial schools, and use $225 million in education block grants to encourage choice programs.

In the America George Bush envisions, schools would no longer be community-based institutions, run by the public for the public. They would be corporate holdings, run by private entrepreneurs for profit. In the future George Bush envisions, schools would serve not as the cornerstone of our democracy, but as monuments to the influence of wealth.

No one who respects the honorable heritage of the Republican Party would dare say that George Bush has remained faithful to the GOP tradition.

I do not for a moment forget that Abraham Lincoln was the first Republican President. I do not for a moment forget that Ohio Senator Robert A. Taft, who seriously damaged his own presidential ambitions by advocating greater federal support for public education as early as 1951, proudly wore the title "Mr. Republican" for his entire career. And I do not for a moment forget that Dwight D. Eisenhower, who returned the Presidency to the GOP after a 20-year exile, championed and signed the National Defense Education Act.

George Bush apparently remembers none of this.

The one constant in the ever-shifting Bush ideology is commitment to privatize public education by shifting public funds to private profiteers. The privatization juggernaut is the force that propels George Bush's entire array of divisive policies.

Under the privatization scenario, we know what will happen to "ineffective" and "inefficient" students—those unfortunate enough to have impediments that make it difficult for them to learn. They will suffer. They will be abandoned.

Under the privatization scenario, we know what will happen to "inefficient" communities—those that are impoverished or overrun by drugs, violence, and social misery. They will decline still further. Misery will intensify.

Our system of public education rests on the premise that the education of America's children is not only a moral responsibility, but also a national investment. It is an investment in our economy, an investment in our democracy, an investment in the noblest ideals of our heritage. George Bush seeks first to diminish, then to abolish, this investment.

In response to this strategy of disinvestment, Bill Clinton has issued a forceful and forthright injunction: "This betrayal of democracy must stop."

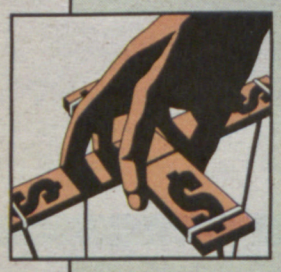
Most thoughtful Democrats believe this response is appropriate. Most thoughtful Republicans agree. And that may just explain why this year, voters aren't going to let partisan labels distract them from the issue of the kind of presidential leadership America needs and America's children deserve.

9 Meet Gary Soto

Californian Gary Soto writes stories about Mexican American children. He's maybe the only writer of children's literature who does. But his work—poetry, stories, and films—reflects the lives of all Americans.

12 Schools for Profit

Led by the Bush Administration's push for private school vouchers, more and more businesses are seeking to turn public education into a money-making venture. *Channel One's* Chris Whittle's just one of these entrepreneurs.



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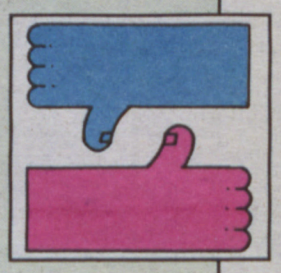
A New Jersey teacher says giving veteran teachers the toughest assignments is a quick fix—but disruptive. A California teacher says experienced teachers have exactly what's needed.



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NATIONAL NEWS

The Campaign's Final Hours

Governor Bill Clinton remains the only candidate for President advocating the public investment in education and infrastructure the nation so badly needs.

In the closing days of a Presidential campaign, all eyes usually focus on public opinion polling numbers. But this fall another set of numbers is vying for the nation's attention: the latest statistics about the economy.

Americans will go to the polls this November amid the longest economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Unemployment, 5.3 percent in January 1989 when George Bush took office, has risen 50 percent over the past three years. Average hourly wages, adjusted for inflation, are at their lowest levels in the past 27 years.

No candidates for President dispute these numbers. What they do dispute is what needs to be done to get the economy moving again.

President George Bush believes that prosperity will return once government gets out of the way.

"We know that the clumsy hand of government is no match for the uplifting hand of the marketplace," Bush said earlier this fall in Detroit as he announced his economic plan.

"My agenda," says Bush, "aims to check the growth of government and, in some important ways, to reverse it."

Gov. Bill Clinton, by contrast, is advocating over $200 billion in new federal investments to "put people first"—by improving education, providing affordable health care, and helping communities convert from a Cold War economy to peace-time.

"In the emerging global economy," says Clinton, "everything is mobile: capital, factories, even entire industries. The only resource that's really rooted in a nation—and the ultimate source of all its wealth—is its people.

"The only way America can compete and win in the 21st century," says Clinton, "is to have the best-educated, best-trained workforce in the world, linked together by transportation and communication networks second to none."

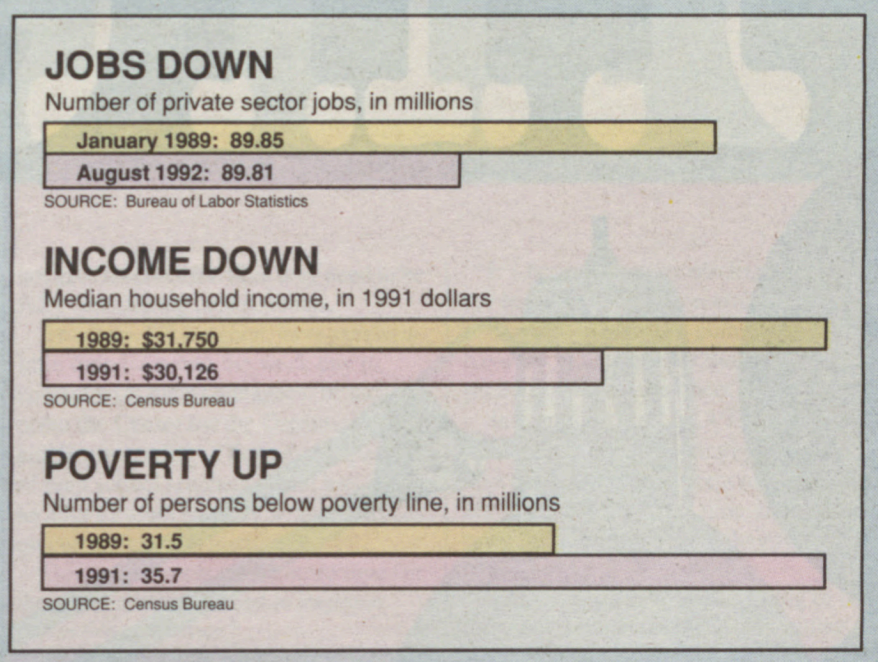
The funding for the investments Clinton advocates would come from higher taxes on taxpayers earning over $200,000 a year and defense savings made possible by the collapse of the Soviet threat against Western Europe.

The contrast between the Bush-Quayle and Clinton-Gore agendas extends even to the specifics of education. George Bush and Dan Quayle want to convert existing federal aid to public schools into vouchers that parents can use to pay private school tuition.

Bill Clinton and Al Gore oppose private school vouchers and have pledged to restore the 30 percent cutback in federal aid to public schools that has occurred since 1980.

Which approach will do more to improve education and enable the U.S. economy to compete effectively in the 21st century? That's the choice before America's voters this November.

Where does H. Ross Perot stand on issues important to educators? Last June, before Perot withdrew from the Presidential race, NEA asked the Texas business leader to complete the NEA Presidential candidate questionnaire. Perot declined to do so.



The Largest NEA Member Election Mobilization Ever

More NEA members are volunteering in this year's Presidential election than ever before, says NEA Government Relations Director Debra DeLee. Earlier this fall, in Indianola, Iowa, south of Des Moines, NEA members from area communities applauded Governor Clinton's call for more federal aid to help kids go to college.

Bill Sherman

HEROES & ZEROES

The Black Family Investment Project sponsored by the Los Angeles County Children's Services Department is helping abusive parents learn to become loving ones.

Twice a week the family comes to a community center for counseling, and once a week an aide visits the home to help parents learn what to expect from kids at certain ages and how to manage a home.

So far, three classes have graduated. Two years after graduation, there have been no referrals for child abuse and 88 percent of the 119 families are still together.

The Poor-Choice-of-Words Award goes to Mattel programmers who make Barbie say "Math class is tough."

That phrase has educators gnashing their teeth at a time when they're trying hard to sustain girls' interest in math. Still, many of the 270 phrases Mattel's programmed into its Teen Talk Barbies are positive, including "Don't be late to school" and "I'm studying to be a doctor."

Award-winning NEA member Don Hoff, a science teacher for 21 years at Velva High School in North Dakota, believes it takes money to run top-notch science programs, so he's plowing back some of his own money into science education.

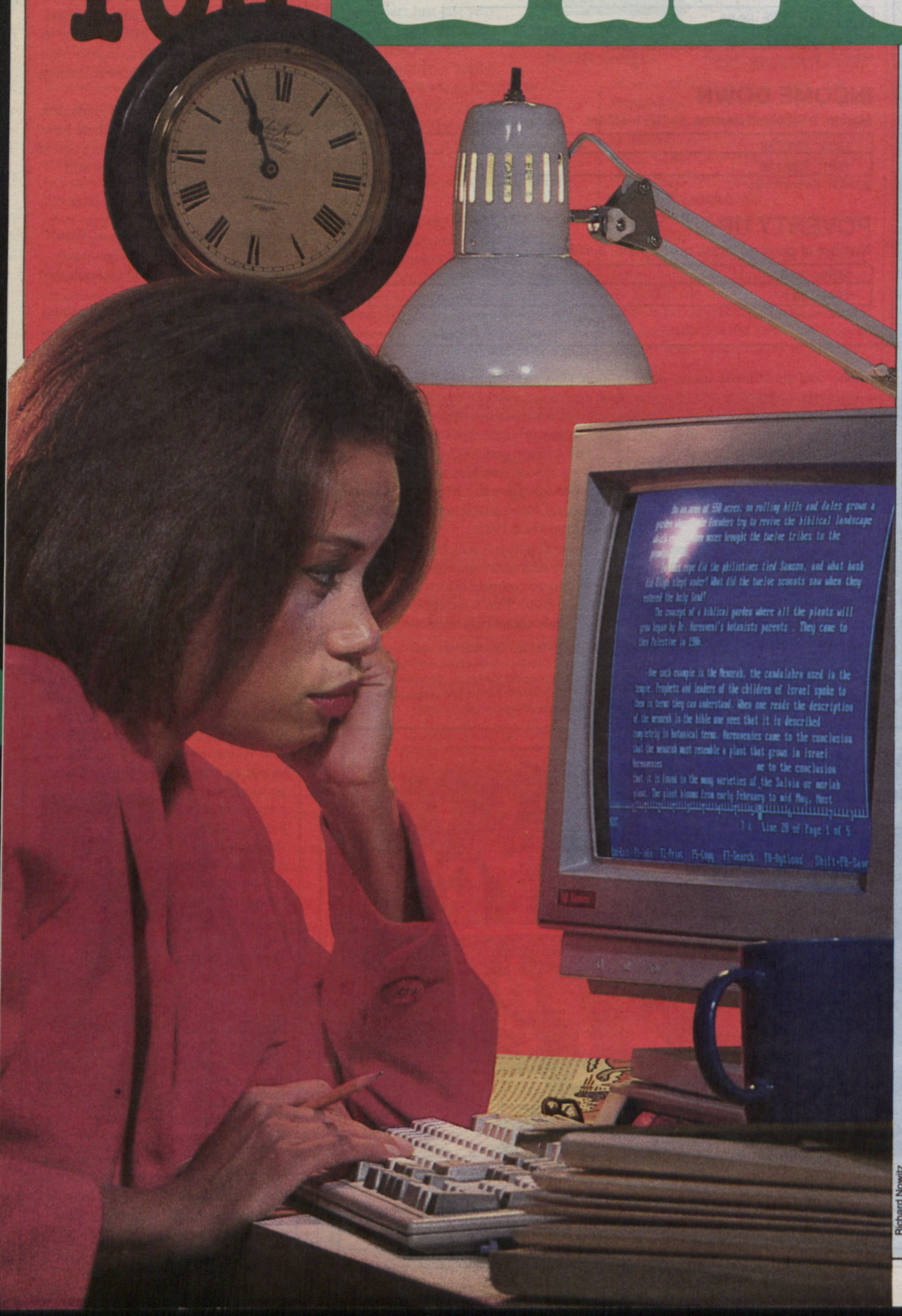
Hoff is using the $34,000 that he received as a Christa McAuliffe Fellowship winner to buy laser videodisks and videotapes of science demonstrations and computer software. And he's holding workshops on computer-assisted lab equipment and software for teachers across the state. This spring Hoff will teach a graduate credit course on science and technology.

The Education-Bashing-for-Profit Award goes to furniture-maker IKEA. Its kick-in-the-face ad, "California hasn't seen figures this low since last year's SATs," is misleading and demeaning to educators and students alike.

NEA has fired off a letter asking the furniture maker and its ad agency to pull the ad and make a public apology for telling readers that test scores have declined when they haven't.

COVER STORY

ARE YOU Tired



Richard Nowitz

Teaching has always been an exhausting profession, and efforts now underway to involve teachers more actively in school decision making are making it harder to get everything done. Still, some NEA members are finding ways to make their days more manageable.

Patsy Ethridge, a teacher at Cleveland High School in Washington State, is acutely conscious of the limited time in her school day. She's constantly juggling teaching duties in marketing, applied math, and U.S. government and economics.

These days, Ethridge is also heavily involved in efforts to restructure how learning takes place in her school. The combination of teaching and restructuring is adding up to 12-hour days.

"I come home from work night after night feeling exhausted," Ethridge admits. "It's so frustrating to see the need for reform, yet feel there aren't enough hours in the day to get the job done."

Margaret Almony is a special education teacher at Ahuimanu Elementary in Kaneohe, Hawaii. Like Ethridge, Almony is working with her colleagues to take on new decision-making responsibilities. And, also like Ethridge, Almony feels an ever-tightening squeeze on her time.

"While becoming 'empowered' is exciting and rewarding," says Almony, "I'm beginning to wonder if all this 'empowerment' is going to lead to 'expirement.'"

Almony chairs a site-based management council at her school.

"I find myself constantly in discourse with parents, students, staff, administration, and teachers," she notes, "from morning 'til the end of the school day."

Thousands of miles away, in Maine, Cindy Guthro is teaching eighth grade humanities and language arts at Wells Junior High—and working on an ambitious school restructuring project.

COVER STORY

OF BEING Tired?

"Our contract used to state the end of the day as 2:30 p.m.," says Guthro. "Now, with the added duties of restructuring, we don't get away before 3:00 p.m. or 3:15."

Extra hours, of course, aren't just a burden for teachers involved in school restructuring. Long hours are a teaching fact of life, as recently documented by NEA's new *Status of the American Public School Teacher* report.

This national study surveys a cross-section of America's teachers every five years. The latest statistics, for the 1990-91 school year, show that teachers spend a mean 46.7 hours a week on all teaching duties.

Many teachers spend much more. The average *required* teacher work week is 36.2 hours. Seventeen percent of elementary teachers spend 16 or more hours above that required time, and 20 percent of secondary teachers spend 16 or more hours above that basic total.

Not surprisingly, in the 1990-91 NEA survey, over 16 percent of teachers said that heavy work load was the single biggest obstacle to doing their job as professionals.

Helping teachers really do a really professional job is, in large part, what the movement to restructure education is all about. But becoming a true professional—by taking on the decision-making responsibilities that other professions take for granted—takes time.

"How do we feel about it? It's one more thing added to our stress-filled schedules," admits Patsy Ethridge from Washington State, "But we believe it's important—or we wouldn't do it."

Will the extra time that restructuring efforts require eventually burn out teachers like Ethridge? That's one possible outcome of the restructuring experiments now underway in schools around the country. But there's another possible outcome. The restructuring work that teachers like Patsy Ethridge are now doing could create new approaches to organizing the school day that might liberate all teachers from the tyranny of time—and make teaching more professional to boot.

Time and professionalism, special ed teacher Margaret Almony from Hawaii has come to believe, are inextricably linked. The traditional organization of the school day—indeed, the traditional job description of teacher—simply does not give teachers the time they need to be fully functioning professionals.

Teachers, for instance, have precious little time built into the work day to consult with their colleagues. In fact, notes the Center for the Organization and Restructuring of Schools, 46 percent of high school teachers spend less than an hour a month meeting with colleagues on curriculum and instruction.

How can schools create more time for the collaboration needed to improve professional practice?

At DeSoto Trails Elementary School in Tallahassee, Florida, NEA members active in a site-based decision making project are putting their focus on the techniques of "time management." That investment time, they believe, is paying off.

As part of their site-based decision making effort, faculty at DeSoto are meeting far more often than ever before. But they've learned to be disciplined about the time they take. They limit their weekly 8:00 a.m. Wednesday meeting to exactly one half-hour.

"We've learned to keep things concise at those weekly meetings," says Julie Fredrickson, who chairs the DeSoto decision making team. "The real work is farmed out to subcommittees that iron out the time-consuming details."

This approach, says Fredrickson, actually ends up involving more faculty more meaningfully in making decisions about how the school operates.

"By working with subcommittees and posting agenda items in advance, we're involving the entire school," Fredrickson explains. "And while some of the subcommittee meetings are time-consuming, they free up the site-based decision making committee to address the major administrative issues of the school."

DeSoto Trails is an exception: few schools in this country have devoted staff development hours to learning collaborative decision making and other management skills. That, says the Center for the Organization and Restructuring of Schools, is a mistake.

"To plan effectively," says the Center, "teachers must also have skills in collaboration. Many do not, and few have had an opportunity to develop them."

Sums up Hawaii's Margaret Almony: "It's becoming more obvious to me that for teachers to be successful at our new responsibilities, we're going to have to have the blocks of time that other professionals have to meet and plan."

In coming issues, *NEA Today* will be looking closely at the strategies and approaches NEA members are pioneering to give teachers the time they need to become the professionals they want to be.

The time question is also going to be the focus of a special NEA committee established last July by a vote of the 8,600 delegates at NEA's 1992 Representative Assembly.

This Committee on Time Resources will be studying everything from the impact of school restructuring on time to such issues as length of school day and school year, release time, and employee compensation.

The committee will report its findings to the 1993 NEA Representative Assembly in San Francisco.

—Victoria Lytle

One Woman's Way Out of the Rat Race

"I never dreamed I could take the time to work on more responsibilities in the district," recalls Edina, Minnesota, music teacher Kay Hawley. "I used to think I absolutely must spend every day in my classroom."

But after reading several books on time management, Hawley put aside her fears of neglecting her students, family, spiritual life, or health. She simply made the time to become more involved in site-based decision making.

Here are some of the practices Hawley says set her free from always being behind schedule—and feeling guilty about it. She shares these pointers with her students:

Set goals and plan ways to reach them. When Hawley asks her students to write an essay on their goals, they usually turn out to have many aims—college, marriage, children—in common. Hawley then helps them recognize their need to work harder on academics and positive relationships.

Create a balanced life. Managing time is like conducting an orchestra, notes Hawley. "You don't want the drums to be too loud, or the cellos too subdued."

Hawley suggests that her students write down how much time they're devoting to their activities: sports, homework, musical practice, phone conversations.

Build the networks you need. After word got out that Hawley was knowledgeable about investments, she formed an investment club. In weekly 90-minute meetings, members learn from one another.

Larry Salzman

Take advantage of technology. Hawley gets a lot of help from her Sharp Wizard, a checkbook-sized computer that helps her keep track of personal information. Compatible with both IBM and Macintosh desktop computers, the Wizard runs spreadsheets and organizes information in a wide range of ways.

Practice the four Ds: Drop it, delay it, delegate it, do it. Hawley has learned to organize her agenda items by level of importance.

"I still believe it's a rat-race society," adds Hawley, "but I've learned to keep personal needs in balance with classroom needs and school reform, and I've become a better teacher."

—V.L.

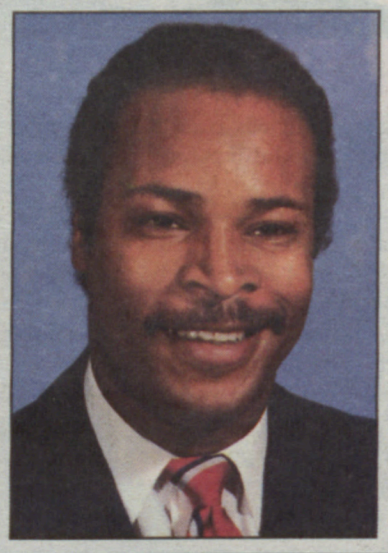
HUMAN RIGHTS

Mentors Boost Male Student Performance

In Wake County, North Carolina, an after-school program linking students with adult mentors is helping turn young lives around.

A cadre of 17 highly dedicated Black male teachers and administrators in the Wake County schools is making a difference in the lives of young Black males through a project called School/Community Helping Hands.

The youngsters in the after-school project are Black males in fourth through eighth grade who've been identified as likely to have problems later on. With a hand from their elders, they've begun succeeding instead. Since it was set up in 1987, the project has helped 240 students significantly improve their grades, standardized test scores, conduct, and attendance.



School principal Darryl Fisher helps kids as part of the Wake County, North Carolina, Helping Hands mentoring program.

Blanzie Williams, Jr., a teacher at Wendell Elementary School, says the project's needed because "there are so few male teachers in elementary schools, let alone Black male teachers."

After getting the family's approval, Helping Hands assigns a fourth-grade student for five years to a Black male educator who serves as a "personal model." Each personal model spends about 20 hours a week working with 10 students after school and weekends.

Williams says, "We look for teachers who are caring people, who can not only put in the substantial amount of time, but make it real quality time."

Explains NEA member Darryl Fisher, principal of Wilburn Elementary School, "Kids know when you're sincere and when you're working hard."

The personal models work very hard. They receive a script-like notebook to help them guide students in four areas: academics, self-esteem, leadership, and interpersonal relations. They also receive $1,000 for each year's work—and that covers not only the 80 hours a month they spend with the students, but also monthly training.

So why become a personal model? The answers are as varied as the men themselves.

Darryl Fisher: "I just wanted to get beyond the paperwork of my job, to do something important directly for kids. As a principal, I have only sporadic contact with students; in Helping Hands I get to talk with kids for several hours at a time."

Blanzie Williams: "It's so rewarding. I love teaching. And by working with the project I'm carrying out one of our mottoes: To achieve all that is possible, you must attempt the impossible."

> ***"Kids need mentors because there are so few Black male elementary teachers."***
>
> *—Blanzie Williams*

William Hennessee, a Carnage Middle School teacher who's writing a master's thesis on programs for young Black males, issues a reminder: "The problems we deal with—low self-esteem, poverty, and peer pressure, for example—aren't unique to African American males, but these problems have made young Black males their major casualty."

For Hennessee, one of the project's great strengths is the way other adults pitch in: "We're the only teacher-led group for Black males. We're pulling community and parents into the school."

Each student has three community models who help his personal model and join the group on trips or talk to the group about their jobs. Parents attend workshops on topics useful to them, like obtaining student aid for college, peer pressure, and teen development.

Now that Helping Hands is five years old, "veteran" personal models are seeing some of their project graduates join the high school Brother to Brother program, and visit the younger students.

"The young ones look up to the teenagers so much," says Darryl Fisher. "One basketball star told how other kids used to call him 'geek' and 'nerd,' but he'd set goals for himself and he was determined to achieve them, no matter what anyone said."

Because of the Helping Hands project, many more young Black males are on their way to setting goals for themselves—and achieving them.

—Melissa Etlin
NEA Human and Civil Rights

To Learn More...

If you'd like more information about Project Helping Hands, write to Pryce Baldwin, Project Manager, School/Community Helping Hands Project, Wake County Public School System, 3600 Wake Forest Rd., P.O. Box 28041, Raleigh, NC 27611 (919/850-1660).

Still another good resource is "School Programs for African American Males"(23 elementary and secondary programs are described) by Carol Ascher. Prepay with a $5 check to: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Box 40, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Person To Watch

Rep. Dale Kildee (D-Mich.), House elementary-secondary education subcommittee chair, will preside in the 103rd Congress over the reauthorization—and likely redesign—of virtually every federal education program.

Best Wins for Education Employees

Cheers for the congressional enactment of three new programs to enhance teacher recruitment and professional excellence! The first is a $350 million grant program to improve the quality of teaching. The second is a New Teaching Careers program that provides a career ladder for education support personnel who want to become certified teachers. The third is a new program to encourage minority students to become teachers.

Worst Defeats for Education Employees

President Bush succeeded last month in killing the major education reform bill before Congress, the Neighborhood Schools Improvement Act. When the House passed its version, Senate Republicans moved fast to protect the President from casting an election-eve veto. They launched a filibuster, and the Senate fell one vote short of ending the delaying tactic. The bill (S.2)—authorizing some $800 million to help states and localities fund education reform—never came up for a Senate vote.

Lost to Presidential veto (for the second time): the Family and Medical Leave Act.

. . .And What You Can Do

Vote for NEA-PAC-endorsed candidates. Observers expect high turnover in Congress. One reason: Almost 100 of this year's 435 U.S. House and 35 U.S. Senate races don't involve an incumbent.

How well education fares will depend on who's elected to Congress—and the 12 state governorships.

Political Cartoon of the Month

Congressional Quote of the Month

"Our children deserve better than empty promises and grand speeches. We owe them more."

Sen. George Mitchell
D.-Maine

Local Look

COLORADO

Parent Education

For three years, the Greeley Education Association's IPD Committee has run an annual Saturday morning make-it-and-take-it workshop for parents of their students.

"We schedule the workshop in the spring," says 1991-92 IPD Chair Jan Bartram, "so we don't conflict with the soccer and baseball team schedules."

"We rotate the parents through three or four presentations," Bartram explains. "In math we've shown them how to teach measurements when they cut up an apple. And in reading, how to help young children read names like 'K-Mart' or 'Wal-mart.' We even provide babysitting."

LOUISIANA

Finally, a Good Day In St. John's

After five years of budget cuts and salary freezes, voters in St. John's Parish have passed four tax and bond proposals.

In all, the bond issue will raise $20.5 million—the largest amount ever—enough to finance a comprehensive school construction program.

Voters also okayed a proposal to divert surplus capital improvement money into the general fund where it will be used to erase the school deficit.

Says St. John Association of Educators President Iona Holloway: "The relationship between the school board and SJEA has become truly cooperative. And everybody's happy: the school board reduced their debt, and we've gained $600,000 in new salaries."

IN LOS ANGELES

UTLA

Traffic ground to a halt around Los Angeles International Airport this fall as angry educators in a 5,000-car mock funeral procession rallied against massive cuts in state aid to Los Angeles schools—and against the targeting of employee compensation to make up half the cuts.

Employee Pay: 12 Percent Off

California's austere budget is hitting home. Los Angeles—the nation's second largest school district—must cut $400 million from its $3.9 billion budget. The district wants more than half that reduction to come from cuts in employee pay and benefits.

The district is proposing that it reinstitute a temporary 3 percent salary cut imposed on teachers last year; that teachers absorb an additional 9 percent in salary reductions and unpaid days off; and that they pay for more of their health care coverage.

To demonstrate how they feel about the budget reductions, United Teachers of Los Angeles members recently staged a mock funeral cortege.

More than 5,000 cars followed the hearse, which bore a child-sized coffin stuffed with students' letters objecting to the state cuts.

The procession ended at Los Angeles International Airport. Delivering a blistering funeral address, UTLA President Helen Bernstein had to shout to be heard above the blaring horns and angry cries of teachers in the procession, which took three hours to pass before her. Bernstein then boarded a plane to Sacramento, where she presented the letters to Governor Pete Wilson.

Adding insult to injury, says UTLA, is the situation of school administrators. The proposed cuts would plunge Los Angeles teachers' pay and benefits from the sixth to the forty-second among California's 43 school districts. Administrators' pay and benefits would remain among the state's highest.

UTLA hopes a commission of civic leaders, headed by a former state attorney general, will be able to find an alternative to the deep pay cuts. But, meanwhile, the Association is urging members to "work to rule"—to stop carrying out responsibility for student extracurricular activities.

OHIO

No Cheating In the Numbers Game

Call it the court victory counted round the state.

The South-Western Education Association (joined by two other Cleveland-area locals, the Madison Education Association and the Talawanda Education Association) has reached an out-of-court settlement with the Ohio Department of Education in a class-action suit over student-teacher ratios.

The lawsuit, filed by SWEA in 1988, cited the practice in some Ohio school districts of including educational services professionals—visiting teachers, counselors, librarians, school nurses, and elementary physical education and music teachers—in calculating student-teacher ratios in the primary grades.

This method, explains SWEA Class Size Committee Chair Eugene Norris, "misleads the public to believe that class sizes in Ohio are smaller than they actually are."

In the settlement, the Department agreed to halt that practice and also to include in the ratio all special education students who spend more than half the school day in the classroom. The Department further agreed to notify districts of the regulations at the beginning of each school year.

Score one for SWEA, MEA, and TEA.

MICHIGAN

Four Against One

Woodhaven High, near Detroit, still shows Channel One, but four teachers who were threatened with firing for teaching during the 12-minute program have made their point and remain on the job.

Their decision to teach instead of viewing the program violated the district's contract with Channel One, which requires daily showing of the 10-minute newscast, with its two additional minutes of commercials, in every classroom.

The Woodhaven Education Association filed grievances in support of the teachers after they were told they must show Channel One to their students. WEA settled the grievance in September. The agreement states that students are no longer required to watch Channel One every day, and teachers don't have to show the program during a lab or test.

"The issue here is academic freedom," points out WEA President Joanne Becker, "not how someone feels about Channel One."

Although the school principal will temporarily maintain a record of the warning issued the teachers, their warning has been removed from their personnel files.

PENNSYLVANIA

Benefit Trust Benefits Employees

School employees in the Williamsport Area school district have nearly a decade of experience with a health care benefit trust. Since 1983 Intermediate Unit 17 (IU 17) in Troy and Williamsport has been putting a certain amount for each employee into the trust every month.

Employees don't put in anything. Their claims are paid out of the amount in the trust. In a really bad year, the trust can turn to several counterparts that will lend one another funds if necessary until the next fiscal year.

An employee benefits trust is covered by federal law, notes Williamsport Education Association President Roger May, one of the employee representatives who make up the majority on the trust's board.

"We work hard to keep the district's health costs down," says May. "The school board appreciates this, and in return they work with us on issues like salaries."

Benefits trusts aren't uncommon—more than 15,000 PSEA members take part in them. But the trustees in IU 17 are working to make theirs even better. They've been studying the state reports on the efficiency, and the charges, of hospitals and other health care providers.

"We're being very deliberate, so as to guarantee the best care for our members," says May. "We hope to direct them to the places that will give them the best care for the best price—and negotiate volume discounts from the health care providers."

"It's a lot of work," he sums up, "but it's a chance to have an impact on escalating medical expenses."

State Side

OREGON

Examining Issues

The Oregon Education Association is studying two important, though unrelated, issues: education reform and its own operations.

OEA's Education Reform Task Force has examined every aspect of Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century, passed last year, and is now circulating position papers to members and outside groups. Among other things, the bill calls for nongraded primary classes and, by 1995, conclusion of the traditional high school curriculum after 10 years.

On another front, OEA is reevaluating its entire program, including member services. Based on the results, the Board will make recommendations for action at the next OEA RA.

ILLINOIS

A Guide to Giving

Illinois education employees have long wrestled with the dilemma of administering medicine to students. A new law now clarifies their roles.

Now teachers and other nonadministrative school employees, except certified school nurses, can't be required to administer medication or perform medical procedures for students. They may volunteer.

The measure was approved by lawmakers over the governor's veto and after a massive statewide campaign by IEA members that included 10,000 pieces of mail.

IEA sent out letters to school personnel suggesting that teachers determine first whether medications must be administered during the school day and, if so, that they ask parents to come in to administer them. Letters also informed members that voluntarily giving medication to a child makes them liable if the child develops complications from the medicine.

TEXAS

Saving the Schedule

With letters, postcards, phone calls, and hearing testimony, thousands of angry Texas State Teachers Association members saved the Texas minimum state salary schedule for teachers from oblivion earlier this year.

The idea of eliminating the schedule came from a state board of education task force, which deliberately deleted reference to it in a report to the board. TSTA members were outraged. They understood that without the schedule, teachers would be left with only a minimum beginning or base salary. Local school districts would be free to set salaries at any "competitive" level they chose.

The outcry of TSTA members was enough to get the salary schedule back into the task force's report, which was adopted by the state board of education this fall. It forms the basis of the board's recommendations for the upcoming biennial session of the legislature.

THE SHAPE OF THE STATES

Mighty Fine in Minnesota

Based on 17 different factors, such as infant mortality, access to health care, education, and pollution, Minnesota's the best state to live in, according to Northwestern National Life Insurance's annual study.

The report ranks West Virginia at the bottom and cites as reasons for its poor showing the high number of auto deaths and the high percentage of people who smoke. The most improved state is Vermont, which jumped from 14th place last year to 7th place this year. Here's how all the states fared:

1992	1991
1 Minnesota	2
2 Hawaii	1
3 New Hampshire	3
3 Wisconsin	5
5 Nebraska	5
5 Utah	3
7 Colorado	10
7 Kansas	8
7 Iowa	8
7 Connecticut	7
7 Vermont	14
12 Massachusetts	11
13 Virginia	11
14 Maine	11
14 Rhode Island	15
14 New Jersey	15
17 Ohio	19
17 North Dakota	17
19 Indiana	18
20 Washington	23
20 Pennsylvania	19
22 California	22
22 Maryland	23
24 Michigan	28
24 Oklahoma	27
26 Wyoming	25
26 Delaware	28
26 Texas	30
26 Montana	19
26 South Dakota	25
31 Missouri	32
32 Illinois	32
33 Arizona	40
33 North Carolina	30
33 Idaho	35
36 New York	32
36 Georgia	36
38 Oregon	39
39 Tennessee	36
40 Kentucky	36
41 Nevada	44
41 Florida	42
41 Alabama	42
44 Arkansas	40
45 South Carolina	44
46 Louisiana	46
46 New Mexico	47
46 Alaska	49
49 Mississippi	47
50 West Virginia	50

NEW YORK

Tailored Workshops

For the first time, paraprofessionals in the Hornell area of western New York have had the chance to attend a workshop planned specifically for them. Fifty parapros took part in the NEA/NY-sponsored workshop featuring sessions on time management, stress management, and assertiveness.

"When it came to training, we'd always been offered workshops that were more relevant to teachers," says Sonia Rectenwald, president of the Steuben-Allegany BOCES Education Support Staff Association (ESSA). (New York's BOCES centers provide special education and vocational education for students in given regions.)

ESSA called on their state Association for help in getting in-service that members could really use. NEA/NY worked with ESSA and the Steuben-Allegany BOCES administration to set up a training session. NEA/NY UniServ reps staffed the workshops, and the district administration allowed the parapros to attend the workshops the same day as the region's teacher conference.

Reflecting the enthusiasm of the ESPs, Rectenwald says, "Next time we hope to offer training for 100 ESPs districtwide."

SOUTH CAROLINA

Some Money Saved

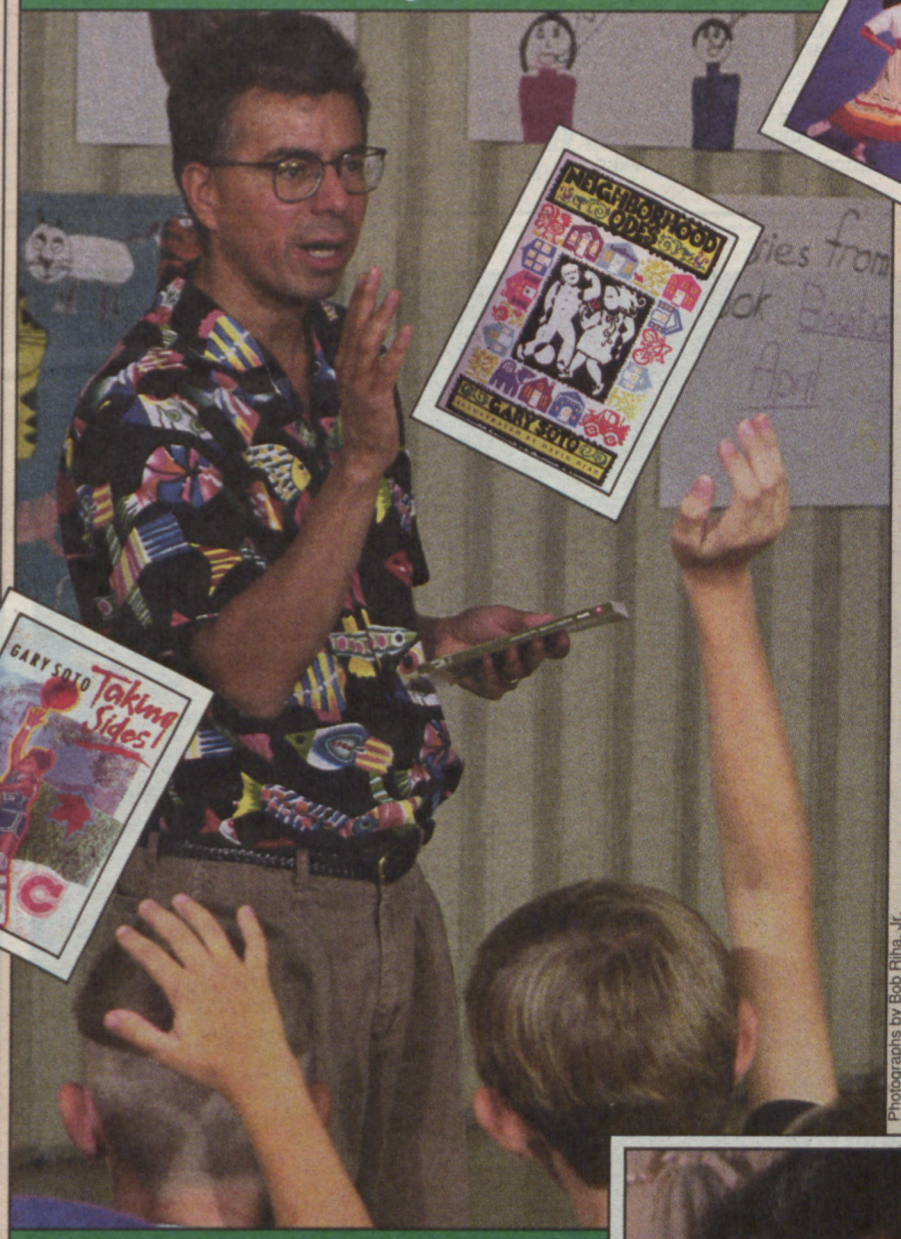
The South Carolina Education Association won a decision in the State Supreme Court that will prevent public education from bearing a greater burden of budget cuts than other agencies.

In August, the Budget and Control Board ordered cuts based on a so-called "growth formula." The formula forced agencies previously designated as higher priority for funding by the legislature to take deeper cuts than other agencies. The SCEA, school boards, and hospital associations then took legal action.

As a result of the Court's ruling, public education funds will be cut by $6 million less than was originally ordered. Still, SCEA isn't pleased with the $47 million that remains to be cut from school funding, although some of those funds could be restored.

Meet:

Gary Soto



Photographs by Bob Riha, Jr.

Always Close To Home

California poet Gary Soto is a senior lecturer in English at the University of California at Berkeley, where he teaches creative writing.

Most of Soto's poems are written for adults, but recently he's started to create poems, stories, even films that reflect the lives of Mexican American children growing up, as he did, poor in California's Central Valley.

Recently NEA Today *staff writer Nancy Needham shadowed Soto on a visit to his hometown of Fresno, California—where most of his stories are set—and to nearby Porterville, where he read from his work to students at Burton Elementary School.*

Why did you start writing stories and poems for children?
We—Mexican Americans—need to have our stories told by books and movies—to see ourselves doing something.

It's sad that my books are absolutely all that's been published for Mexican American children. Eight or nine publishers rejected *Baseball in April,* my first story collection for children. Then it got good reviews and sold well. And off I went.

When you read from *Baseball in April,* the kids recognize the "older, meaner brother," the headless Barbie doll. How do you remember the details of childhood so precisely?
For a long time I never left my childhood. I was always thinking about it. In Fresno, I grew up next to a junkyard, across from a pickle factory.

Then we moved, and my father was killed in an industrial accident right away. I kept going over those events in my mind until I was into my 30s—thinking if we'd done this instead of that, everything would have been different.

And you keep returning to Fresno?
Yes, but Fresno's still a frontier town, spreading and cannibalizing itself—tearing down the fig trees and grape arbors for new housing. It's a place where neighborhoods are used up and abandoned.

But your children's stories don't reflect this seriousness, do they?
My stories tend to be more playful and comic than my adult literature—though at their core they have an "angst" that reaches the reader.

Your adult poems do have "angst."
Yes. My first book of poems was *The Elements of San Joaquin.* I wrote it when I was 21. It's grim, very hard, dismal. It has not one funny line. It's about violence—the Valley as an element—wind, dust, and stars, about family, childhood, and loss.

What were you like in high school?
I had a 1.6 average at Roosevelt High School. But I was scared I'd have to go to Vietnam or work in a factory. At 16 and 17, I was working in carwashes, or in the fields picking grapes, which is dusty, degrading—and dangerous, from chemicals.

I didn't see how people could do that every day. So I went to a community college and then to Fresno State.

Before I was a writer I was a playground kid, and a "novio"—a "lover boy." I was a marginal kid. I could have gone from the playground to prison or to college.

Was there a person who made a difference?
Literature can make a difference to the marginal kid. In high school, I read *To Sir with Love.* I loved it. I read it again five years ago, and it's a terrible book. But at the time it seemed written for me.

Then you have to find a good teacher. Or pair yourself with a person doing the same thing. My friend Scott and I were little philosophers, kicking ideas around, coming of age from seventh grade to college. We wanted girlfriends, clothes, cars, money. I started to write poetry in college when I was rooming with him.

How did you get interested in poetry?
At Fresno State I intended to major in geography. Then I came across the Beat poets—Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti—and they were so powerful. I was lucky to discover at 19 what I wanted to do.

I published *The Elements of San Joaquin* at 24, and it won a major prize. In graduate school at UC Irvine, I was living for poetry—determined to go all the way.

When did you start writing for kids?
About four years ago. I did a group of short stories, *Living up the Street.* I got fan letters from junior college kids all over the country. They all said, "I used to do things like this." They meant the break-in, the fights, first love, working in fields and factories, clothes—a special jacket.

And you've made some films based on your stories?
Yes. I've produced my own 16mm. films of "The Pool Party" and "The Bike." I said to myself when I decided to make them: "I'm going to break the door open for Mexican Americans and make the film industry use us creatively.

My uncle's in both films. He's as good as Red Foxx, but he's never been used. The other actors are Mexican American kids and adults from Huron, California.

The kids always ask you where you get your ideas—besides your own life.
I always tell them, "From you. You tell me a story, and I'll make it bigger."

One kid told me his "older, meaner brother" took his picture in the shower and said, "Give me $10, or I show it to all the girls in school." That became my story "Blackmail."

How will you get more Mexican Americans to write?
I had a meeting of Chicano writers at my house and suggested that they think about children's literature.

And I have my own reading program for 150 kids in the Puente Program for Hispanic community college students. They read 12 books from a list of 50 and write about them. Three Mexican American writers—Jimmy Santiago Baca, Helena Viramontes, and I—sign off on what they write. We give them a certificate.

There are 6 million Mexican Americans in California. Only four have ever received the Master of Fine Arts in writing from UC Irvine. We have to do better.

Gary Soto's latest kids' books are The Skirt *(Delacorte),* Pacific Crossing, *and* Neighborhood Odes *(both from Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).*

To purchase VHS cassettes of "The Bike" and "The Pool Party," send $98 and $198, respectively, to Gary Soto, 43 The Crescent, Berkeley, CA 94708.

RESOURCES

TV Tips

The Dove—*Arts and Entertainment, Saturday, Nov. 7, 8-10 p.m. ET.* True story following the five-year journey of teenaged Californian Robin Lee Graham as he sails around the world on a sloop..

The Jacksons: An American Dream—*ABC, Sunday, Nov. 15, and Wednesday, Nov. 18, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Two-part miniseries about how the musical Jackson Five rose from obscurity to the top.

The Glass Ceiling—*CNN, Sunday, Nov. 15, 9:30-10 p.m. ET.* Special on women in the workplace.

The New Europeans—*PBS, Tuesdays, Nov. 17, 24, and Dec. 1; check local listings for times.* Three-part series examining the move to unify Europe into one political and economic power.

Mysteries Underground—*PBS Wednesday, Nov. 18, 8-9 p.m. ET.* The season's first National Geographic Special is about exploration of underground caves. For a free resource guide for all the 1992-93 Specials, contact your local public television station.

The Dinosaurs—*PBS, Sunday, Nov. 22-Wednesday, Nov. 25; check local listings for times.* Four-part series about the time when dinosaurs ruled the world.

You Must Remember This—*PBS, Thursday, Nov. 26, 4-6 p.m. ET.* Wonderworks Family Movie about a film student who learns her beloved great uncle, a barber, was one of the first Black movie directors in the 1920s. Robert Guillaume and Tim Reid star. Study guide appeared in the September issue of *NEA Today*. For a copy of the guide, send a $3 check to QED West, 3171 Los Feliz Blvd., Suite 205, Los Angeles, CA 90039.

Empire of the Red Bear—*Discovery, premieres Sunday, Nov. 29, 8-11 p.m. ET.* Documentary on the people and the animal and plant life in the vast interior of the former Soviet Union, an area hidden from Western filmmakers for more than 70 years.

An American Short Story—*CBS, Sunday, Nov. 29, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Hallmark Hall of Fame special presentation drama about GI's who experience disillusionment when they return from World War II to their rural Texas hometown.

Population and the Environment—*TBS, Sunday, Nov. 29, 10-11 p.m. ET.* World of Audubon film highlights two families—one in Madagascar and one in Manhattan—who illustrate the strain on natural resources and ecosystems from increasing populations in developing countries and the environmental stress created by peoples in the industrialized world.

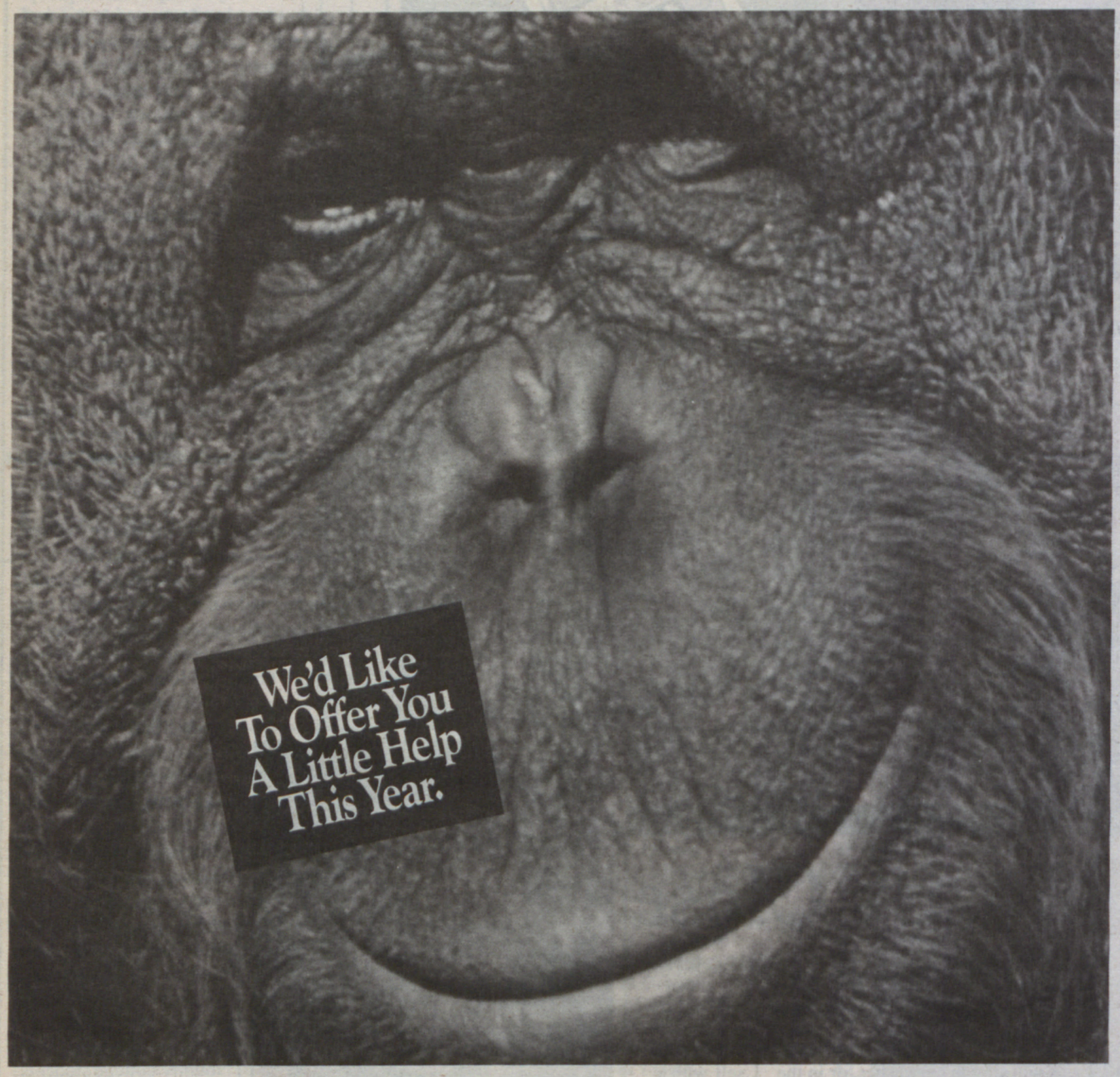
DOC: The Dennis Littky Story—*NBC, Monday, Nov. 30, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Actor Michael Tucker (right) portrays principal Dennis Littky, who turned his troubled Thayer (New Hampshire) High School

around with an idealistic theory of management: letting teachers and students take their ideas and run with them.

But the idea of change aroused anxiety and resentment among some community members, and Littky had to fight for his ideals. Based on the book *Doc: The Story of Dennis Littky and His Fight for a Better School* by Susan Kammeraad-Campbell (Contemporary Books).

Stalin—*HBO; check local listings for dates and times.* Robert Duvall stars in this film about 40 years in the life of Joseph Stalin.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's TV and radio in Washington, D.C.



Enrich your curriculum with the National Geographic Specials Resource Guide poster.

Trace the joyful homecoming of an orangutan, the brilliant culture of the Maya, the thirsty survivors of the Skeleton Coast, and the perilous drop of an underground explorer.

The new National Geographic Specials will present stunning portraits of a world few have actually seen.

They will captivate your students. Stimulate questions and concerns and a desire to know more.

Which is why National Geographic and the people of Chevron have once again produced for you an invaluable Resource Guide, now redesigned as a poster. It's an educational tool to spur conversations and projects based on the Specials.

The poster is available through your local PBS station. Or you can find it in the November issue of WORLD, the National Geographic magazine for kids.

What's more, you're encouraged to videotape the shows. We ask only that taping be used solely by nonprofit educational institutions. And that you make one tape of each Special, which cannot be modified, rented, copied, leased, sold, or shown to paying audiences.

National Geographic Specials are produced by the National Geographic Society and WETA/Washington, D.C. And made possible by the people of Chevron.

Be sure to check listings for show times on PBS.

"Mysteries Underground"
November 18, 1992

"Lost Kingdoms of the Maya"
January 20, 1993

"Keepers of the Wild"
February 17, 1993

"Survivors of the Skeleton Coast"
April 14, 1993

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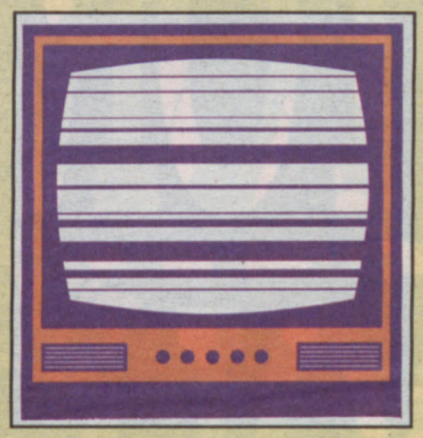
RESOURCES

Teacher TV: It Lasts



***Teacher TV*—the weekly magazine-style program coproduced by NEA and the Learning Channel—has many lives beyond the original showings.**

The half-hour episodes of *Teacher TV* are almost as popular the second time around.

The shows' timely, relevant topics from school restructuring to tips on kids' health makes them invaluable for state and local Associations and members as well.

State Association leaders often kick off workshops by showing *Teacher TV* segments. They say the tapes clarify education issues as no manual or verbal presentation ever could. The videos are also good organizing tools.

In some cases, state leaders are sharing program segments with legislators—again, because the tapes convey so well what the education issues are.

"Restructuring is difficult to explain," notes Barby Halstead-Worrell, NEA's director of *Teacher TV*. "But with a *Teacher TV* segment, you can show someone the essence of one aspect of school restructuring in a few minutes."

Teacher TV is just as useful to other key audiences. College professors use the tapes to get discussions going in teacher training classes. They often show the beginning of a segment, turn off the VCR, and ask questions like: "What would *you* do in this situation?"

PTAs use brief segments from the program to supplement presentations to parents. The tapes help parents understand what's going on in today's classrooms.

To order *Teacher TV* programs, call the Discovery Channel at 800/221-5200. The prices are $19.95 per show and $135 for the seven-show fall 1992 package.

Another key to *Teacher TV's* success is the fact that its producers interact with school employees. One very tangible part of that interaction is the 10 $300 minigrants awarded each school year to help fund innovative school programs. Teachers and school support workers are eligible to apply. For more information, watch *Teacher TV*.

Teacher TV welcomes suggestions for future program segments, both feature story concepts and tested classroom ideas that others can adapt. Send suggestions to *Teacher TV*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Teacher TV's fall run continues through November 15 on the Learning Channel. Starting November 29, the series will rebroadcast programs from the spring run. All programs air on Sundays, 6-6:30 p.m. ET.

November 8: **Curriculum Innovations.** Schools in Wausau, Wisconsin, and Lovell, Wyoming, offer their innovative ideas in several subject areas.

November 15: **Time.** Schools in Colorado Springs, Colorado; Haddon Heights, New Jersey; and Louisville, Kentucky, are restructuring the school day to give staff more time to teach, plan, and confer.

November 29: **Technology in the Classroom.** Schools in Fairfax and Falls Church, Virginia; San Francisco; Central Kitsap, Washington; and Millard, Nebraska, use technology to increase student learning.

December 6: **The Making of a Teacher.** Programs in Portland, Maine; Omaha, Nebraska; and Clarksville, Tennessee, are improving teacher training.

If your cable system doesn't carry the Learning Channel, a few notes or phone calls could change that. To get the name and address of the general manager at the cable company that serves your area, call 800/443-1212 and give the operator your zip code.

—Diane Dismuke

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Earthquakes can happen almost anywhere... they're not just confined to California and the Pacific Coast.

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EDUCATION FOR SALE?

PRIVATE SECTOR eyes PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There's a growing movement to privatize public education, fueled by the voucher plan proposed by President George Bush. The new entrepreneurs pushing privatization see schooling as just another profit opportunity.

Is education a public service—or an opportunity for private profit?

Until recently, few Americans ever even posed this question. Most Americans, businesspeople included, saw education as a distinctly public enterprise.

But this consensus is now cracking. The President of the United States has started deriding public schools as "government monopoly" schools. Politicians at the state level, cheered by the President's attacks, are pushing voucher proposals that would finance private school tuition with public tax dollars.

And, at the same time, a new generation of entrepreneurs has emerged, all eager and willing to make schooling a profit center as hot as any fast-food franchise.

A few years ago, private companies were contracting with school districts to provide one or two essential services—food service, for example, or bus transportation, or building maintenance. Districts still contract out specific services, but now the trend has taken on new dimensions. In some areas, private companies are running entire school systems.

Here are some of the faces of privatization, 1992:

► Business wheeler-dealer Chris Whittle, with financing from the Time Warner conglomerate, is developing a chain of high-profile, for-profit elementary and secondary schools. See sidebar.

► Education Alternatives, Inc. (EAI), a private, for-profit management and consulting firm, has been running the 800-pupil South Pointe Elementary School in Dade County, Florida, since last year. Its take: $1.2 million for a five-year contract.

This year EAI starting running eight elementary schools and a middle school in Baltimore.

► In Delaware, former Governor Pete DuPont is pushing a proposal to give each child in the state $2,150 to attend any school, public or private.

► In Indiana, about 900 children of low-income families attend private or parochial schools, thanks to payment of half their tuition (up to $800 each) by the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust of the Golden Rule Insurance Company.

► At least 27 states have privatization initiatives pending. This month, Colorado voters will decide whether parents can get up to $2,500 in public money each year—and not just for private or parochial school tuition, but even for educating a child at home.

In California, an initiative to offer vouchers for public or private school tuition was headed toward a ballot this month. The vote has now been put off until June 1994—unless the governor calls a special election.

NEA members in Colorado, California, and all the other states facing private school voucher proposals are now working hard to stop any initiative that would use public tax dollars to finance private school tuition.

The basic NEA position is simple and direct. Private schools have a place in American life, but not a right to public funding.

Reform plans that give parents choices within the public school setting, delegates to NEA's annual Representative Assembly have concluded, may be worth trying. But plans that use "choice" to justify the financing of private education will only, in the end, undermine public education.

Can privatization improve education?

Minnesota Education Association President Robert Astrup, whose state is no stranger to privatization initiatives, cites the multimillion-dollar Chrysler bailout and the savings and loan crisis and asks, "Are we ready to let corporations run America's public schools?"

Last year, the Duluth, Minnesota, school district signed a four-month $40,000 contract with EAI to provide an interim superintendent during a time of transition. EAI did that, but several board members weren't impressed and the district ended the relationship.

Clearly, the problems with EAI and other private contractors aren't just legal or educational—they present ethical issues as well. Contracting out the jobs of public employees—the most basic form of privatization— raises the question of whether it's right to strip employees of their modest salaries, health insurance, and retirement benefits so schools can operate with replacements at minimum wage.

In Baltimore, EAI plans to save money by replacing paraprofessionals with interns—and requiring teachers to train them.

Although EAI maintains that no current paraprofessional will be displaced (a temporary settlement specifies that paraprofessionals can remain with their EAI-assigned schools), the district continues to hire new interns.

EAI also runs its own private schools, which it cites

as examples of achievement. The first "Tesseract" school opened in 1987, the second a year later.

EAI founder John Golle estimated then that "by Year Five" he'd have "20 schools up and running, revenues of $30 million, and investor returns of 30 percent."

But today EAI still has only those first two Tesseract schools—and its losses for fiscal year 1991 alone are estimated at more than $1 million.

Companies running schools have different goals from educators. They're out to make money, not to help children. And, in most cases, both the company and the district have the right to break the contract at the end of each school year. What happens to a school if, when the going gets tough, the company running it bails out?

On the other hand, when a private company is successful at running a public school, it's often because the company pours money into the school, to create a showcase project.

"Give that same money to every public school, and then let's look at the success rate in public education," says NEA President Keith Geiger.

NEA believes that tax dollars should go only to public schools because there is an overriding public interest in universal, quality, and free education for all.

Most private schools, in contrast, are created on the basis of a common preference—religious, economic, linguistic, or otherwise. By definition, they tend to segregate rather than unify.

In his book *Why We Still Need Public Schools* (Prometheus, 1992), Robert Bullough, Jr., a professor of educational studies at the University of Utah, argues that programs that encourage parents to "choose" private schools feed on narrow self-interest.

"Choice programs," says Bullough, "make it unnecessary for parents to explore common territory and to compromise differences in the quest for a shared program that is in the best interest of all students."

President Bush apparently sees no conflict between public and private school philosophies. His well-publicized America 2000 "education strategy" would provide federal funding for private and parochial schools, in effect defunding public schools.

It's the strong Bush Administration push for public-private school choice that has encouraged more and more private entrepreneurs to get into the education-for-profit act—and the White House drumbeat for vouchers has also influenced many Americans. A recent Harris poll shows 69 percent of our population favor private-parochial school vouchers for poor or middle-income children.

Most businesses in America are still strong supporters of public education, and NEA is currently working with many business leaders on joint projects to help improve public schools.

Minnesota's Astrup emphasizes that public schools belong to everyone, and everyone has a say in how schools should operate.

"We need everyone's ideas and expertise, business included," he says. "But we shouldn't turn control over to companies whose sole motive is profit."

—Diane Dismuke

Resources

Interested in doing some more reading on the privatization threat to public education?

False Choices: Why School Vouchers Threaten Our Children's Future is a new anthology that covers every aspect of the school choice debate.

Single copies are $3 plus $2 handling. Write to Rethinking Schools, 1001 E. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212.

What's Whittle Up to Now?

By now, the work of entrepreneur Chris Whittle is familiar to most educators. Three years ago, Whittle Communications offered to provide technical equipment to every school subscribing to Channel One, its 12-minute news program for students. Many educators were concerned because each program directed two minutes of commercial advertising at its impressionable "captive" audience. That concern hasn't gone away.

Nonetheless, Whittle claims almost 8 million students in 10,000 schools see Channel One every day. Whittle's advertising revenues add up to more than $100 million a year.

Whittle is putting his profits from Channel One into developing his Edison Project, a national network of for-profit schools, headed by former Yale University president Benno Schmidt. Time Warner holds 38 percent of Edison Project stock, with an option to buy another 30 percent. Associated Newspapers, a British tabloid publisher, holds another 25 percent.

Slick Lawson/*Time*

Whittle's timetable calls for the inauguration of 200 for-profit schools by 1996 and as many as 1,000 in another 10 years. The success of the Edison Project clearly depends on the success of the Bush Administration's voucher proposal. In fact, the Project only made its public debut after Bush announced his plan.

Schmidt and Whittle claim not to be adversaries of the public schools. But author and child advocate Jonathan Kozol quotes Whittle as saying, "You have to have a West Berlin for an East Berlin to fall. And what we're doing here is building West Berlin."

"This fascinating metaphor in which he likens the American common school to the collapsing Stalinist monstrosity of East Berlin is consistent with the language used by many voucher advocates," says Kozol, writing in *The Nation*.

Kozol points out that Edison Project schools have been able to advertise a proposed tuition of $5,500—the national average spent per pupil in public schools—because of Whittle's unique proposals to cut costs. He'd not only use volunteers, classroom aides, and computerized instruction to cut the number of teachers, but he'd use students to do some of the work now done by school custodians.

Whittle also says that 20 percent of Edison's students would attend on scholarships, but those students would be separated from those who pay.

"In an inner-city school, he says 95 percent of the kids would be on scholarship, while in suburban settings only 1 percent may be on scholarship," Kozol continues. "Whittle appears untroubled by the certainty that he is thereby guaranteeing segregated schooling."

—D.D.

RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Who's Involved with Hunger: An Organization Guide for Education and Advocacy. Patricia L. Kutzner. Gives names and addresses of organizations—governmental and non-governmental, domestic and international—concerned with alleviating hunger or formulating hunger policy. 50 pp. $7.50 plus $3 p&h. World Hunger Education Service, P.O. Box 29056, Washington, DC 20017.

WRITING

Kids Have All the Write Stuff: Inspiring Your Children To Put Pencil to Paper. Sharon A. Edwards and Robert W. Maloy. Edwards, an Association member, and her coauthor have aimed their book on "process writing" at parents, but include teachers as well, who can use it as a guide to instruction. An added value: the Young Writers' Bookcase describing 250 books to inspire young writers. 300 pp. $10. From booksellers or by mail (add $2 p&h) from Consumer Sales Dept., Penguin USA, Box 999, Bergenfield, NJ 07621.

COUNSELING/ARTS/MEDIA

As Seen on TV. D. C. Denison. Inside view of TV industry by producers, studio engineers, grips, and gaffers. Simon & Schuster/Fireside. 240 pp. $14. From booksellers.

Exploring Careers in Music. Paul Bjorneberg, compiler. A how-to-get-started book on career entry in all phases of music—including performance, teaching. American Music Conference and Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Stock no. 1011. 112 pp. $8 plus $2 p&h. MENC Publications Sales, 1902 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091. Or order by telephone at 800/828-0229.

Stay Home and Star! William Paul Steele. An actor/theater teacher/drama critic describes how to find work acting in regional theater and films, including commercials and other corporate productions. Heinemann. 154 pp. $13.95. From booksellers or by telephone order (add $3.50 p&h) from 800/541-2086.

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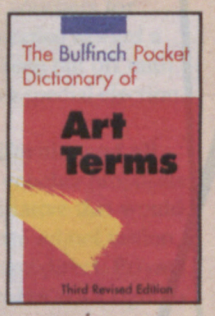

The Bulfinch Pocket Dictionary of Art Terms. Revised and edited by David G. Diamond. A classic in its field—defines nearly 1,000 art terms. Bulfinch Press/Little, Brown. 3rd ed. ISBN 0821219057. 192 pp. $8.95. From booksellers or by mail for $8.70 prepaid (OH, MA, CA, NY add state sales tax) from Little Brown and Co., Order Dept., 200 West St., Waltham, MA 02154.

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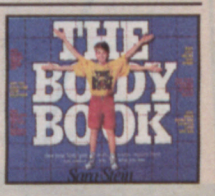
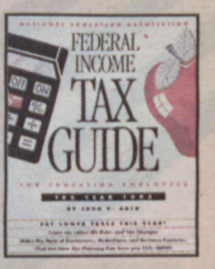


The Body Book. Sara Stein. An encyclopedia of how the human body works, for age 10 and over. Workman. 304 pp. Paperback, $11.95. From booksellers or call 800/722-7202 (add $3 p&h).

TAXES



Federal Income Tax Guide for Education Employees. John Arch. The definitive tax guide for educators in a new user-friendly format. 1992 ed. 208 pp. Book only, stock no. 2215-7-FF. $7.95. Book plus electronic spreadsheet (for Apple II AppleWorks and IBM Microsoft Works), $19.95. Choose format: IBM 5.25" disk, stock no. 2219-X-FF; IBM 3.5" disk, stock no. 2221-1-FF; Apple II 5.25" disk, stock no. 2217-3-FF. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. 800/229-4200.

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Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

Ray Tanaka

Kindergarten teacher Abralette Kaneakua works at her normal school setting on Fridays.

Four-Day Week Comes to School

At one elementary school on Oahu, the academic schedule runs just four days a week—creating new opportunities for students and the community and, at the same time, helping solve a long-standing problem for teachers.

Ma'ili Elementary is located in a rural area on the leeward coast of the island of Oahu, Hawaii, some 30 miles from downtown Honolulu.

Many of Ma'ili's 56 teachers spend up to an hour commuting to school each day—and another hour getting home. Up until a year ago long commutes were causing as much as half the staff to leave as soon as they received tenure.

To stop the teacher exodus, Ma'ili's school-community-based management team adopted a four-day week in September 1991, after studying the concept for a year. The new schedule is part of a larger school improvement plan, designed to help Ma'ili's 900 students, many of whom have special learning needs.

Now, after more than a year of working with the four-day schedule, the faculty has stabilized. Further mitigating the long commute time is a waiver from the state board of education, permitting teachers to take their 45-minute prep time wherever they like.

Actually, saying that Ma'ili Elementary operates on a four-day week isn't telling the whole story. More precisely, the school is on a modified five-day week.

True, academics are taught only Monday through Thursday, and the great majority of teachers teach only on those days. But on Fridays, Ma'ili offers optional enrichment courses—and teachers can instruct one of those courses for extra pay, if they want to. Only a handful do.

But that doesn't mean that teachers don't spend their Fridays on school-related activities. Jodilyn Kropf, a first grade teacher, explains that she and many of her colleagues often spend the day visiting the state's technical assistance center, located in downtown Honolulu.

"Because of the center's operating hours and the fact that our school is so far away, this is about the only time we can use its facilities," says Kropf. "There we can get the materials and instruction to make things for the classroom. We can also check out films and videos to use in the classroom."

When Ma'ili's management team members—teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community residents—researched the proposed change in scheduling, they found that schools in 13 other states had four-day school weeks. But to their knowledge, Ma'ili is the only school to offer a fifth day of enrichment classes.

The Friday classes aren't limited to Ma'ili students; anyone in the community can enroll. And it's not unusual for parents and kids to take classes together.

On a typical Friday, about 600 children and adults attend classes. Students taking a full Friday schedule—five classes—actually have more hours of instruction than Hawaii's other elementary school students.

Among Ma'ili's enrichment program offerings are computer literacy, enrichment language arts, Hawaiian language, karate, aikido, drama, arts and crafts, hands-on math for first graders, ceramics, hula, ukulele playing, and team sports—football, basketball, and baseball. Many of the instructors come from the community.

Adults can enroll in a competency program that leads to a high school diploma. There's also a course in substitute teaching.

New this month is a program for babies born addicted to drugs, operating in conjuction with Head Start. Participants come through health agency referrals.

Principal Curtis Young explains that the school management team believes these babies are becoming common in the area. They hope this program will help alleviate some of the kids' problems later on when they reach kindergarten.

"We want to turn the school into a community center," says Kropf. "Many parents of our students don't come into the school at all, and many of our students have poor attendance and low test scores.

"By drawing parents into the Friday program, we hope to increase their involvement in their children's education. And, in fact, that's already happening."

When the school was on a five-day week, Ma'ili's K-6 classes started at 7:30 a.m. and ran until 2 p.m. four days a week, and until 1:25 p.m. the fifth day.

Today classes start at 7:15 a.m. and run until 2:30 p.m. Recess and lunch periods are shorter. Also, teachers have given back five days of professional development, formerly held on Fridays.

"This schedule allows us to offer enrichment classes that expose our students to a type of learning they don't often experience," says Kropf. "We're hoping the classes will lead these kids to a greater appreciation for learning and, ultimately, to greater achievement in life."

—Diane Dismuke

Ray Tanaka

Among the enrichment classes offered on Fridays at Ma'ili Elementary is a course in karate taught by Faith Tom.

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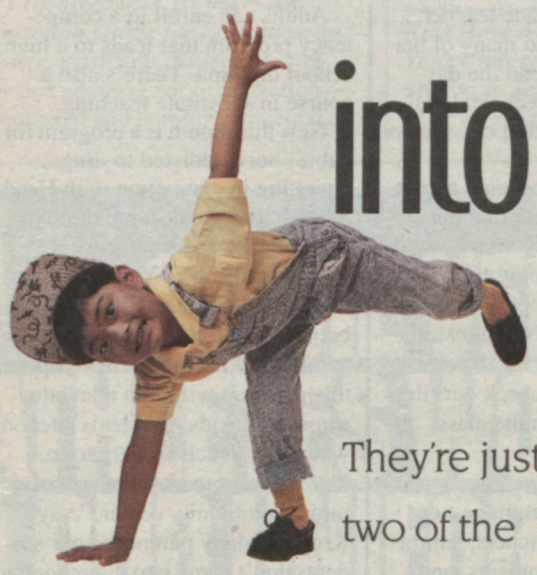

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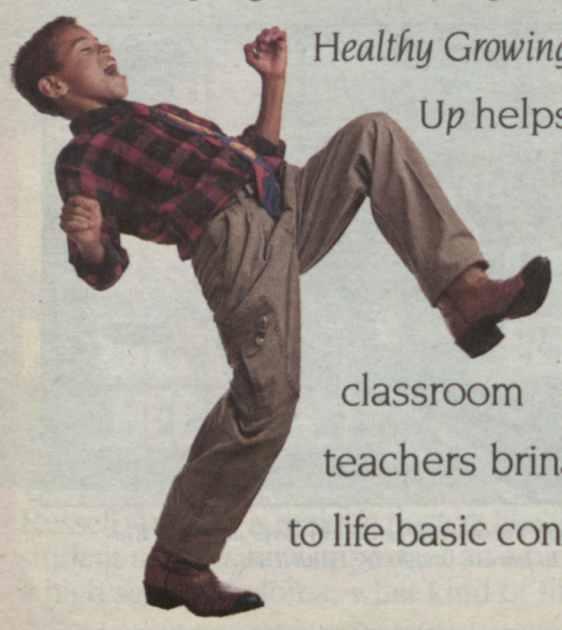

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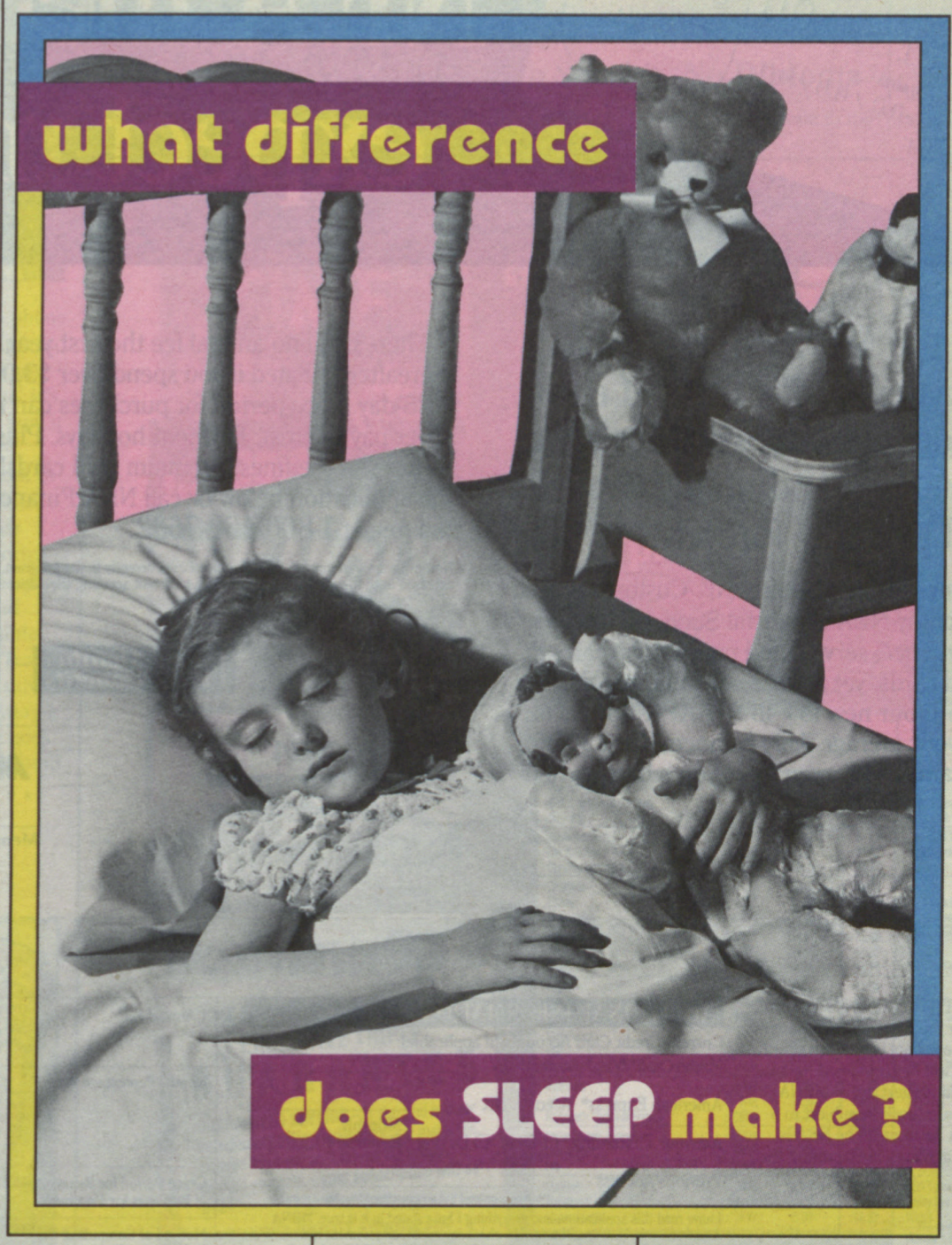
Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn

Pam Berry

Dr. Richard Ferber is the Director of the Center for Pediatric Sleep Disorders at Boston Children's Hospital. He's been studying pediatric sleep disorders for 14 years and has written about them in his book Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems *(Simon and Schuster, 1986).*



Do American children have problems getting enough sleep?
Six- to twelve-year-olds have less trouble going to sleep and staying asleep than younger children or teenagers. Their sleep schedule is still controlled by their parents, so you rarely see them napping at inappropriate times.

In adolescence, sleep schedules may begin to vary wildly from weekday to weekend. If kids get up six or seven hours later on the weekend than during the week, by Sunday night they aren't able to fall asleep at the usual time. This sets up a double whammy—they're tired from too little sleep, and they're in school when their body rhythm is still set on sleep. That affects their functioning markedly.

What about kids who work?
They may have difficulties, especially if an afterschool job forces them to do homework late at night. A weekend job may actually help them keep their sleep schedule if it requires them to get up early.

How much sleep do kids need?
At ages 6 to 11, about 9 or 10 hours. Ages 12 to 14, 9 hours. Ages 15 to 18, 8 or 9 hours.

How much is too much sleep?
Few six- to twelve-year-olds will get more sleep than they need. At that age, they're probably more wakeful during the day than they'll ever be again. They should be wide awake all day. If they're falling asleep in class, they may have a problem.

Adolescents' sleep problems are likely to be schedule problems: they don't get enough sleep at night and make up for it during the day.

But an adolescent who's sleeping 11 or more hours a night—really sleeping—has a serious problem.

Even more serious is a youngster who's falling asleep during the day despite getting a normal amount of sleep at night.

What could that kind of napping mean?
It could mean a sleeping disorder. Narcolepsy, where people fall asleep without warning, may develop in late childhood or the early teens. Sleep apnea—sleep disruption—is more common in younger children, at the age when they tend to have big tonsils and adenoids.

Or napping could mean a medical problem: hepatitis or mononucleosis or more severe disorders, such as tumors or depression.

What other factors can cause sleep problems?
Drug and alcohol use is one. Alcohol and certain drugs increase sleepiness, decrease sleep quality, and compound any other problems the child may have.

What are some other reasons many teenagers are short on sleep?
As youngsters go through school, their academic and social requirements keep them up later, yet they have to be at school earlier. They get squeezed on both ends.

And at that age grooming takes more time. If their bus comes at six, they may have to be up at five. If they went to bed at ten, that's seven hours of sleep. They're running a couple of hours short a night. Ten hours short a week. If their personal sleep requirement is more than nine hours, they're severely sleep-deprived.

Are there cumulative effects of sleep loss?
Yes. Most people can do well after one night of insufficient sleep, but over successive nights, functioning progressively decreases. To get back to baseline, they need to get enough sleep for several nights in a row.

What are the consequences of prolonged sleep problems?
It depends on the individual. If kids consistently don't have enough sleep, they're tired, have trouble paying attention, can't do their best, and start doing poorly in school.

If the problem goes undetected, students' self-image may deteriorate. They may wrongly decide they're not of college caliber. By the time the problem is diagnosed, it may be too late to change their plans.

What about kids who live in shelters, are homeless, or live in other disruptive settings?
We don't see that so much. Kids usually can fall asleep under a wide range of circumstances. But not, of course, if they're staying up on purpose or if there's real social disruption, such as an abusive parent. I remember one teenager who'd be awakened by a certain person or would stay up to protect other people.

Children may live in a house where a lot of people are coming and going and there's a lot of noise and drug use. It's certainly difficult to sleep in that setting.

How might teachers spot children with sleep problems?
By their inability to pay attention and follow the lesson, difficulty staying awake when the lights are turned down, or signs of stress—nervousness, behavioral changes, displays of temper.

And the classic signs of sleepiness—yawning, drooping eyelids, no energy.

What steps can teachers take?
They can talk with colleagues who work with the child and observe the child outside the classroom—in the lunchroom or the gym, or on the playground.

They might talk with the child (and the family). But a youngster's not likely to tell you "the problem is, I'm drinking too much on the weekends" or to discuss problems at home.

Ask the student what time he or she goes to bed. If the problem is an inability to fall asleep within a few minutes, it may be a schedule problem.

What is the best role for school employees?
Their job is to offer the first line of awareness of what's going on.

I'm always surprised when parents complain their kid is too tired, but when I ask about what's happening in school, they haven't the slightest idea.

Often that's the crucial information—how the child is functioning during the day at school.

Any other advice?
Don't think of sleepy children as lazy, and don't ridicule them. Find out why they're so sleepy and see if they can be helped.

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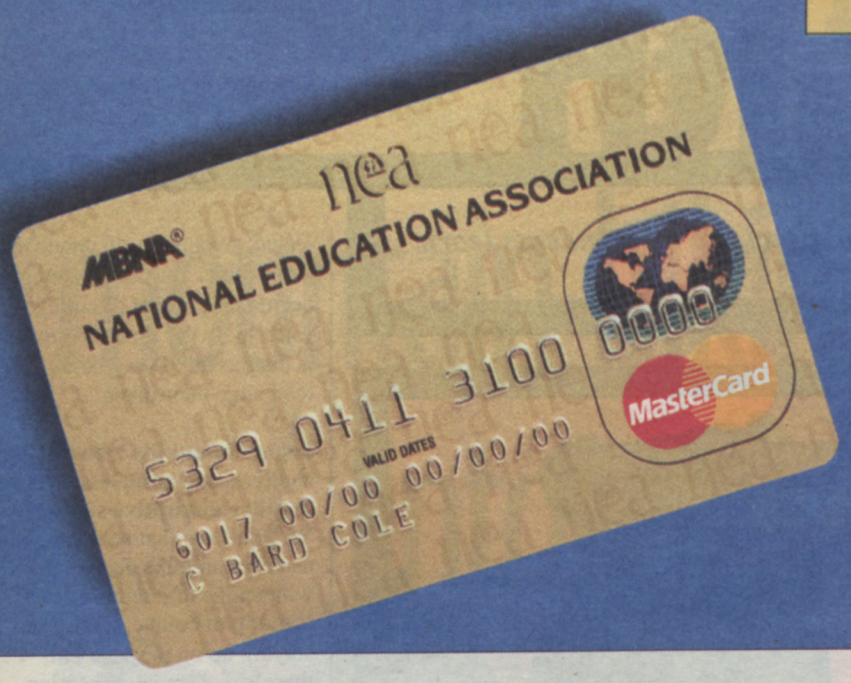

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TRENDS

'TeacherReacher' A New Feature

Bell South has come up with a new phone feature that promises help to schools faced with the cumbersome task of lining up substitute teachers at the last minute. It's called the TeacherReacher. Here's how it works:

Teachers requesting substitutes call in and leave the basic information about their positions—name, school, grade level, etc. The system takes the information about the teacher taking leave and cross references it with a database of substitutes to develop a list of possible matches. Using automatic dial, the TeacherReacher recording alerts the first substitute on the list of the position. Eliciting a response by touch-tone, the system goes down the list of potential substitutes until it finds one who can work.

'Bad' Cholesterol Linked to TV

Youngsters who watch TV excessively have been found to have high levels of "bad" cholesterol, according to a study summarized in the July issue of *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The study evaluated the family history, television viewing habits, dietary habits, and physical activity of 1,081 children and young adults, from 2 to 20-years old (average age was 7 1/2). Results showed that children who watch two to four hours of TV daily are twice as likely to have a cholesterol level of 200 or higher as those who watch less than two hours of TV a day.

Where in the World?

Learning "where it's at"—the study of geography—is getting a lot more attention these days now that geography's on the National Goals list of subjects kids are supposed to master before graduation.

Typical of the many activities designed to promote geography education is the Parents Geography Project held in Michigan last year. Participating families attended a one-hour geography workshop, put up a world map in their TV room, watched the news together once a week, and talked about the news using the map.

Families that completed 10 weeks of watching the news together proudly display a bumper sticker that says, "I taught my parents where it's at," and a beach-ball globe. The Parents Geography Project was co-sponsored by the Michigan Council for the Humanities and the Michigan Geographic Alliance.

No Service, No Diploma

Maryland has become the first state in the nation to require students to perform community service to graduate.

The community service provision begins next year for incoming freshman. The program will require 75 hours of volunteer work or completion of an alternative service program developed by the school system.

Community service will be interpreted to include work in soup kitchens or homeless shelters as well as in-school activities like tutoring.

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Nov. 92

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People

Ms. Senior America

Geri Aksomitas deals daily with the stuff of drama—for 21 years she's used stories like *Oedipus Rex* and *Romeo and Juliet* to get students at Hartford's inner-city Quirk Middle School to deal with the realities of morality and human values.

But Aksomitas' own life took a dramatic turn last winter: she tried out for Ms. Senior Connecticut and won. In April she went on to the national contest in Atlantic City, sang "Bye, Bye, Blackbird," and once again captured first place—and the title Ms. Senior America. This year she's spending part of her time on the road, making the appearances that go with her position.

But most of Aksomitas' time will still go to teaching 1,300 kids about classic drama. Every year every youngster at Quirk spends 10 hours—spread over 10 days—in a fine arts mini-course that touches on history and theory of music, elements of art, and history of drama.

"To kids who've lost a brother or an uncle in gang wars, *Romeo and Juliet* is very close to home," notes Aksomitas. For kids who get really interested in drama, she conducts a voluntary after-school class. This group performs a holiday vignette and does an hour-long production in the spring.

Richard Nowitz

Aksomitas is responsible for the existence of Quirk's drama and theater arts program: it's built on a $50,000 Roberts Foundation grant she won in 1972.

"Why should kids in the rich little towns be exposed to the classics and not these kids?" she says. "We hope it'll be an incentive to read."

Aksomitas also brings experience to her new role as Ms. Senior America. She served as Miss East Hartford of 1950 and Miss New Britain of 1951.

'Mother Phonics' and Her Helper

Phonics, whole language, and puppetry all come together in South Carolina educator **Linda Smith's** first grade classroom. Her success in incorporating the two reading pedagogies with fun musical activities, flannel board stories, and puppetry has brought the Edgefield County Education Association president the name "Mother Phonics."

In working with such classic stories as "The Three Little Pigs" and "Chicken Little," Smith dresses up as a maternal figure with bonnet and apron who manipulates the poplin puppets as if they were babies.

Beverly McGee, a third grade teacher at Johnston Primary School in Johnston, South Carolina, made the puppets Smith uses, one for each letter of the alphabet. The letter *e* wears an evening gown and the letter *a* wears an apron. Even a puppet's eyes show the letter it represents.

Smith's popular approach has made her her school's Teacher of the Year and brought the chance to offer courses to teachers at the University of South Carolina-Aiken and in school-district seminars.

Jeff Amberg

Mr. Kuglin Goes to Washington

What's that you say? You doubt that telecommunications technology can transform a classroom? **John Kuglin** may change your mind.

The Missoula, Montana, teacher and two of his fourth graders at Cold Springs Elementary School recently explained to a U.S. Senate subcommittee how telecommunications can give new dimensions to learning.

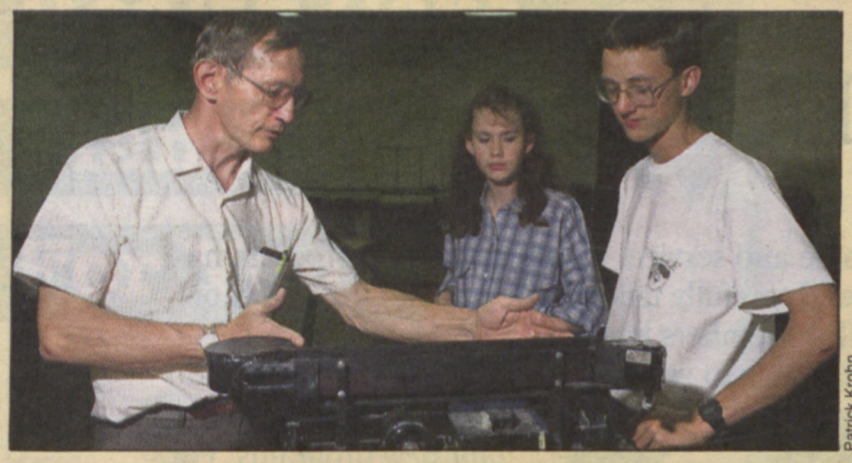
The three were on Capitol Hill to testify before the communications subcommittee of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, at the request of Montana's Senator Conrad Burns.

Kuglin has been nationally recognized for creative use of Cable in the Classroom, which brings viewers more than 500 commercial-free hours of educational programming each month.

As Kuglin and students Jayson Slater and Kayla Brosious (above) told the subcommittee, telecommunications takes students far beyond textbooks. Through Cable in the Classroom broadcasts and materials, their class tracks global events like the Gulf War, the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, and now the Presidential campaigns.

"In fact," says Kuglin, "it's changing the way my students view life. Homelessness, for example, was a problem far removed from their sheltered environments, but Cable in the Classroom has made it very real."

For more information, write to Cable in the Classroom, 1900 N. Beauregard St., Suite 108, Alexandria, VA 22311.



Patrick Krohn

Can-Do, Inc., V. Bangerter, Prop.

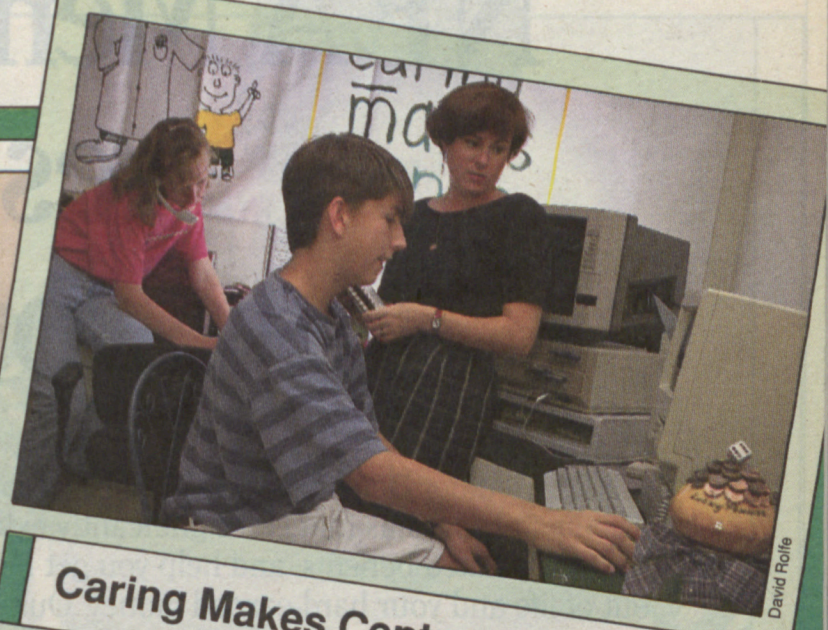
"I've never gone out looking for work—it just keeps coming in," says Utah physics/electronics/technology/computer programming teacher **Vern Bangerter.**

Why would people who need solutions to engineering problems go to Bangerter at Provo's Timpview High School? "Because I have the best lab in the state," Bangerter explains.

He means it. In a 40-foot square space, with assorted side rooms, Bangerter has top-of-the-line, built-in physics and electronics equipment—the result of assiduous attention paid to grant opportunities. One of the little side rooms houses a $100,000 spectroscope, mothballed by a nearby university.

So it's not surprising that, for instance, a businessman trying to create a display in which a meat scale electronically flashes "$1 off" would contact Bangerter, or that one of Bangerter's students would create such a device.

"I could have easily doubled my income by going into industry," says Bangerter (for years he did outside research on dental technology) "but I got hooked on teaching. The contribution I can make in teaching is more important than some device or machine I might come up with. I'd rather have an impact firsthand than second or third."



David Rolfe

Caring Makes Cents

What began as an alternative to a standard Christmas charitable project has become a statewide campaign to help the 163,000 North Carolina children who lack health insurance.

Last year, students in **Kim Payne's** seventh grade classroom wanted to do more for the poor than collect a food basket at Christmas. "During our class discussion, one of my students, Erica Lane, mentioned the Caring Program for Children. The project provides health care to children who don't have access to medical help because their families don't have health insurance," recalls Payne.

With Payne's help, the students established Caring Makes Cents, a project that collected 1.3 million pennies in just four months. The $13,000 collection meant 53 children in Guilford County could be immunized, receive regular medical checkups, and have access to routine care. "For the first time, these children won't be turned away from preventive medical care," notes Payne.

"When my students collected 70,000 pennies the first day, I realized we'd reach our goal of one million in no time," says Payne.

The project was so successful that Payne is taking this year off to help students statewide organize their own Caring Makes Cents projects.

"The real credit for this project will always remain with the children," insists Payne. "They've taught us all a lesson in caring."

Plastered for Posterity

Each year **Dianne Bergenske's** (inset) fourth graders in Mineral Point, Wisconsin, adopt an endangered animal. "I want them to know they can make a positive difference in the world," says Bergenske. "For a dollar per student, they can adopt an animal and contribute to society and ecology."

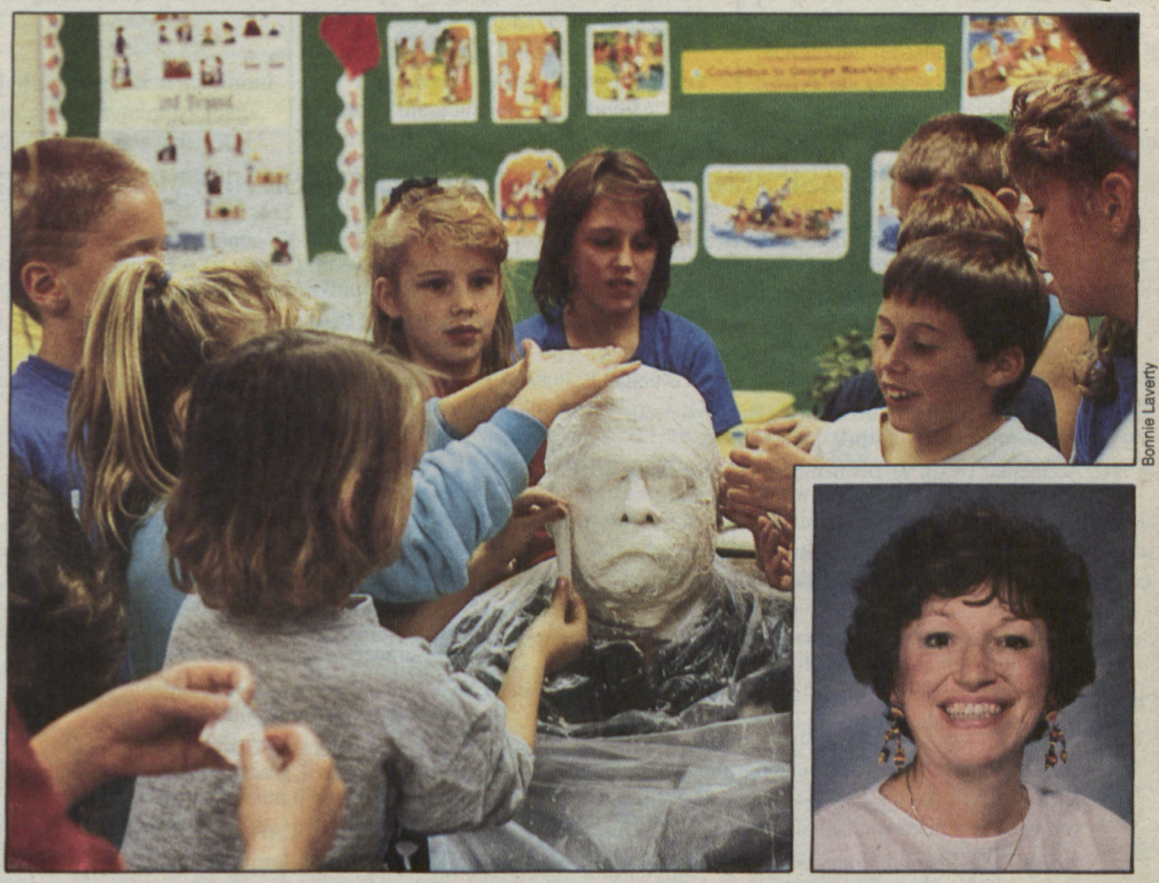
Three years ago the kids voted to adopt a Florida manatee. Their money helped feed "Amanda" and protect her environment. The next year they adopted a leatherback turtle.

With the help of Mineral High School art teacher **Bonnie Laverty** and her students, Bergenske's students made life-size papier-mâché models of the manatee and the turtle for their classroom.

Then, last year, Police Officer John Hughes visited the class to talk about drug abuse. The students liked him so much they adopted him, which gave Laverty an idea.

Plaster. Yes, Officer Hughes got plastered. It took the students five hours to cover him—with the same stuff used for casts for broken arms.

This year the kids bought 100 square feet of rain forest and are adopting a rain forest animal. In the near future, they hope to build an animal sculpture for the school playground.



Bonnie Laverty

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Is Your Health Care Plan Right For You?

Choosing the right health care plan isn't easy, but navigating through the complexities can bring handsome rewards—like savings of $1,000 a year.

So many health care options are available, at so many prices, that even health care planners have a hard time choosing their coverage. But year's end, when many employers permit changes of health care option, may bring you the chance to make a very smart move.

School employee health plans take two basic forms, says Robert O'Brien, a consultant in the Seattle, Washington, office of Foster Higgins, an employee benefits consulting firm.

In some states, each school district offers a health plan to its employees. In others, school employees are part of the larger plan offered to state employees. In either case, O'Brien says, school employees have many of the same choices as employees in private companies.

One of those choices—an increasingly appealing one—is likely to be some type of "managed care" network, that is, a health maintenance organization (HMO) or a preferred provider organization (PPO). The idea behind these networks is a simple one: Employers want you to give up some of your freedom of choice in order to save money.

At first, employees strongly resisted these networks because they believed the care the networks offered was inferior. Many complained, also, that patients were forced to wait too long to get an examination and treatment.

But today many doctors will accept both patients whose bills are paid by an insurance company and those who are in an HMO network. Those who use traditional insurance simply pay more for the same service.

Here are the chief advantages of managed care:

- No deductible to satisfy
- No claim forms to file
- A flat fee as low as $2 for an office visit
- Coverage for preventive care such as mammograms, checkups, and well-baby visits
- Cap on out-of-pocket expenses of about $500.

In contrast, deductibles for traditional insurance plans, called indemnity plans, continue to rise. These plans generally reimburse you for only 80 percent of covered charges until you've paid perhaps $1,500 or $2,000 out of pocket. (The 20 percent you pay is called coinsurance). They don't cover preventive care at all. And you may have to lay out the money to pay your medical bill, then file a claim and wait to be reimbursed.

At the same time, a trend in managed care networks allows you to go to a doctor outside the network if you're willing to pay more of the costs yourself. For example, a new type of HMO, which might be called an open-ended HMO or a point-of-service HMO, is the fastest-growing type of managed care plan. When you sign up for this type of arrangement, you get all the advantages of an HMO, as long as you use the doctors in the network.

But, unlike a traditional HMO, which requires you to pay everything if you go outside the network, this type of plan might require you to pay only 20 or 30 percent of that cost. The principle is to reassure employees that if something terrible happens to a family member—such as a rare disease or unusual medical condition—they can consult a specialist wherever they like and still get much of the bill paid.

A couple of other good things are happening with HMOs. First, many are establishing relationships with centers around the country that specialize in particular medical problems. For example, several provide treatment by specialists at Baylor University's liver transplant center in Dallas, according to David Oberkircher, vice president in the Newtown, Pennsylvania, office of Noble Lowndes, benefits consultants. That means you'd get access to the best minds in the field and still have all your costs picked up through the HMO.

"They even pay for family members to travel there and stay in a hotel," Oberkircher says.

Second, many employers are subsidizing the cost of premiums for managed care networks in an effort to get employees to join. "Some employers price them less expensively in the belief that managed care offers the best hope of cutting costs down the road," says Joseph Martingale, vice president of Towers Perrin, benefits consultants in New York.

For all these reasons, managed care networks have become an extremely attractive option. Your share of the premium for traditional insurance and managed care might be about the same. But if you have any medical costs at all during the year, you'll save money with managed care, because you won't have to satisfy a deductible or pay coinsurance.

The other decision many people must make is how to coordinate benefits with a working spouse. When a family is covered under more than one health care plan, coordination of benefit (C.O.B.) rules determine which plan will be the primary one (the first to pay), which will be secondary, and how much each plan will pay.

Many employers are looking for ways to entice employees to drop health coverage and opt instead for coverage on their spouse's plan. For example, 69 percent of the companies that offer flexible benefits allow employees to waive health coverage, according to a 1991 survey by Foster Higgins.

In many cases, it no longer makes sense for spouses to sign up on each other's plans. In the past, most policies allowed participants to collect 100 percent of their claims between the two spouses' policies, after paying any deductibles. If the primary policy paid 80 percent of covered costs after a $100 deductible, the secondary plan might pick up the remaining 20 percent after its own deductible was met.

Most employers are moving toward a provision called "nonduplication of benefits." That means the secondary plan won't duplicate benefits paid by the primary plan.

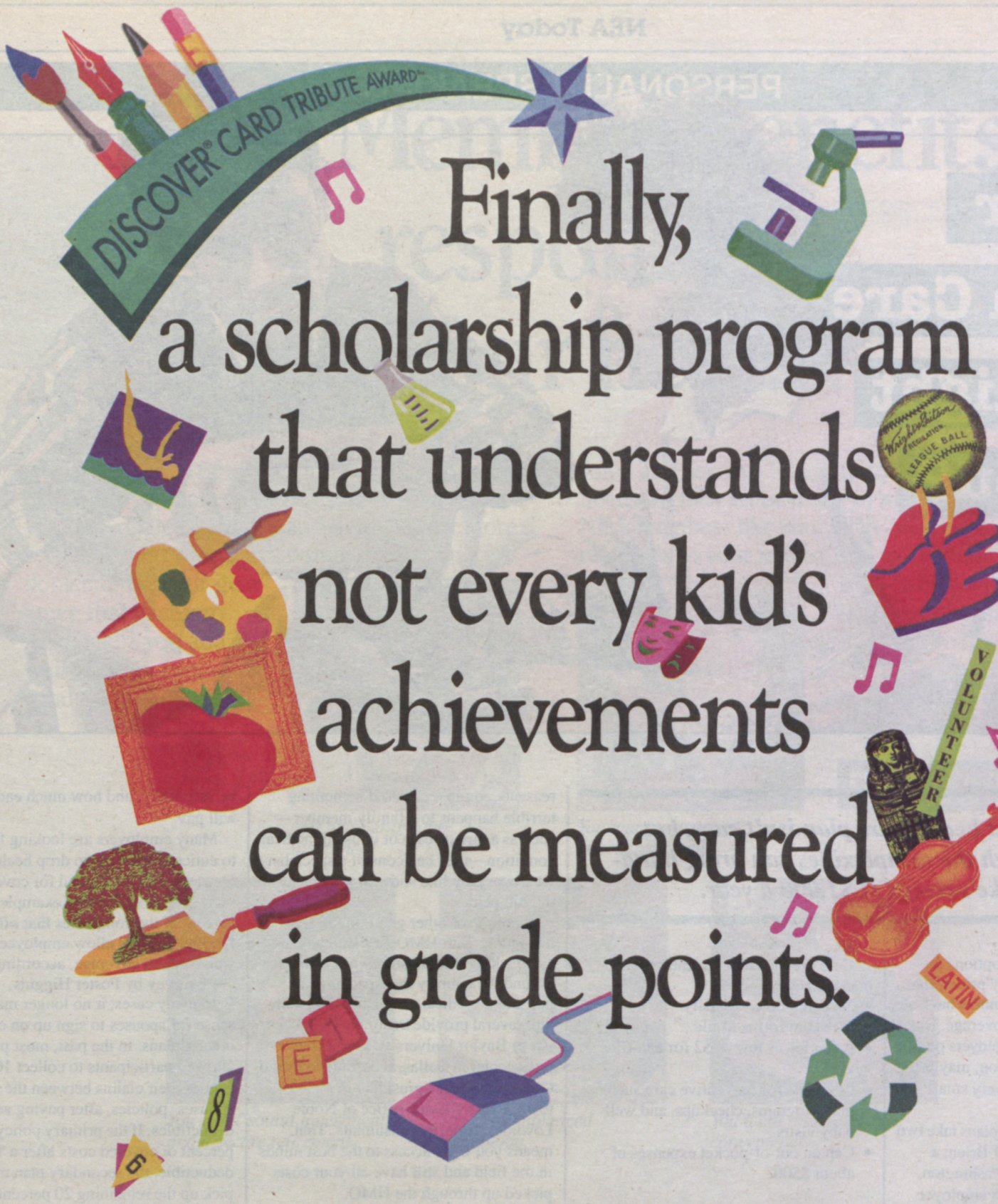
"So it's no longer always a good idea to enroll in your spouse's plan," warns Oberkircher.

What about dropping out of one of your plans altogether? That makes sense if, for example, one of you can choose an HMO that the family likes. Before you decide to drop the other plan, though, check to see whether it has a "pre-existing condition" clause. If so, should you want to sign on again, you won't be covered for any medical conditions you have at that time.

That could be important if your spouse loses his or her job, you decide to divorce, or your spouse wants to spend time at home with the children.

So, if your plan has a pre-existing condition clause, you might do better not to drop out. You can still increase your flexibility by opting for the least expensive coverage.

—Mary Rowland



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LEGAL TIMES

HOW FREE IS THE Student PRESS?

Until a 1988 Supreme Court decision, high school student journalists enjoyed a substantial degree of freedom under the First Amendment to determine the content of official school newspapers. Times have changed.

The 1970s and early 1980s were times of relative freedom for student newspapers to publish articles on a wide range of controversial topics. The lower federal courts had held that students had the right to run features on teen sexuality, birth control and abortion, drug abuse and criminal conduct by students; commentaries critical of school policies and personnel; and stories on such "non-school-related" topics as the draft, war, and racism.

This trend toward student press freedom came to a screeching halt in 1988 when the High Court handed down its decision in the case of *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*.

Hazelwood arose when two St. Louis-area high school students sued their principal for deleting two articles—one on teen pregnancy, the other on divorce—from the official school newspaper.

In upholding the principal's decision, the Supreme Court said that school officials have the authority to exercise "editorial control" over "school-sponsored publications" so long as their actions are "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns."

This means, the Court said, that officials can censor articles on "potentially sensitive topics" if—in their judgment—the topics are "unsuitable for immature audiences" or are deemed too controversial.

Not surprisingly, there have been only a handful of legal challenges to student press censorship in the four years since *Hazelwood* was decided.

In the leading case, *Planned Parenthood v. Clark County School District*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals last year held that a Nevada school district lawfully could refuse to run advertisements for Planned Parenthood in school publications in order to avoid embroiling itself in the controversy surrounding family planning.

Similarly, a Michigan federal court last year rejected the claims of two faculty advisers that a high school principal violated the First Amendment by confiscating copies of the school literary magazine. The principal's action was justified under *Hazelwood,* the court held, because of the presence of a short fictional piece about a student suicide, a poem containing two vulgar words, and an illustration of a champagne bottle and glass.

Finally, a New York federal court in 1989 refused to dismiss a lawsuit brought by a faculty adviser claiming that he was removed from his position as adviser because he allowed the paper to publish a student commentary opposing the creation of a federal holiday to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.

The court said that a trial was necessary to determine whether the newspaper was an official, school-sponsored publication subject to the *Hazelwood* ruling. If the publication were found to be an extracurricular activity, greater First Amendment protection would apply.

Mark Goodman, an attorney who runs the Student Press Law Center (SPLC) in Washington, D.C., claims the *Hazelwood* decision has had a chilling effect on the ability and willingness of student journalists to write about serious issues and the problems that kids face today.

SPLC reports that, since *Hazelwood,* school officials have censored stories about crimes against students, racially motivated fights, student drug abuse, burglaries in the schools, teacher contract negotiations, and school board elections. And the principal at Carroll Middle School in Raleigh, North Carolina, last year banned the peace symbol from the school literary magazine because some religious groups consider it a symbol of the Antichrist.

Given the lack of press freedom for official school newspapers, many student journalists are now trying out alternatives—with some interesting results. In House Springs, Missouri, last year, the Northwest High School principal refused to allow the student newspaper to print a student's piece on incest, only to read the uncensored original article in the local newspaper.

Other students have tried publishing independent, "underground" newspapers. Because these papers aren't official school publications, the courts have generally not allowed the broad editorial control that *Hazelwood* permits administrators to exercise over official publications.

According to the precedents established so far, underground newspapers can be censored or banned only if they contain articles that are libelous, are obscene, will cause a substantial disruption of the school, or advertise illegal products.

Nor have students who write for school-sponsored publications given up the fight. They and their advocates have launched a state-by-state campaign to enact state laws to restore the press freedoms denied students by the Court in *Hazelwood.* And they have enjoyed some initial success.

In the last three years, state legislatures in Colorado, Massachusetts, Iowa, and Kansas have passed laws guaranteeing to student journalists the right to determine the content of school publications, except for obscene, libelous, and disruptive expression.

Importantly, all four statutes also include provisions absolving faculty advisers and other school officials of any civil or criminal liability for articles appearing in school publications. The Kansas law even contains a provision protecting advisers from retaliation from the school district for the content of student publications.

This type of legislation typically is sponsored by legislators with some prior contact with scholastic journalism, according to SPLC Director Goodman. The chief sponsor of the Massachusetts legislation was a member of the legislature who, as a high school student editor, had personally experienced censorship. In Kansas, the sponsor was a Republican state senator who'd taught high school journalism. Lobbyists favoring such legislation include state scholastic press associations, students, and advisers.

SPLC, which has drafted model legislation to try to win greater student press protections, reports that similar legislation has been introduced in 18 other states over the last few years. And Goodman is optimistic that these legislative efforts will succeed.

NEA members who want more information about laws and legal precedents governing the student press should contact the Student Press Law Center, 1735 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 504, Washington, DC 20006 (phone 202/466-5242).

Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

DATA BANK

Stats about the Public Schools

Number of public school districts	15,367
Total number of public schools	83,425
Elementary	59,757
Secondary	20,359
Combined K-12 schools	2,280
Other	1,029

Total public K-8 enrollment	29,742,000
Total public 9-12 enrollment	11,284,000
Number of public school teachers	
Elementary	1,379,000
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Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics 1991*, updated by NEA Research in August 1992.

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Teen Sting

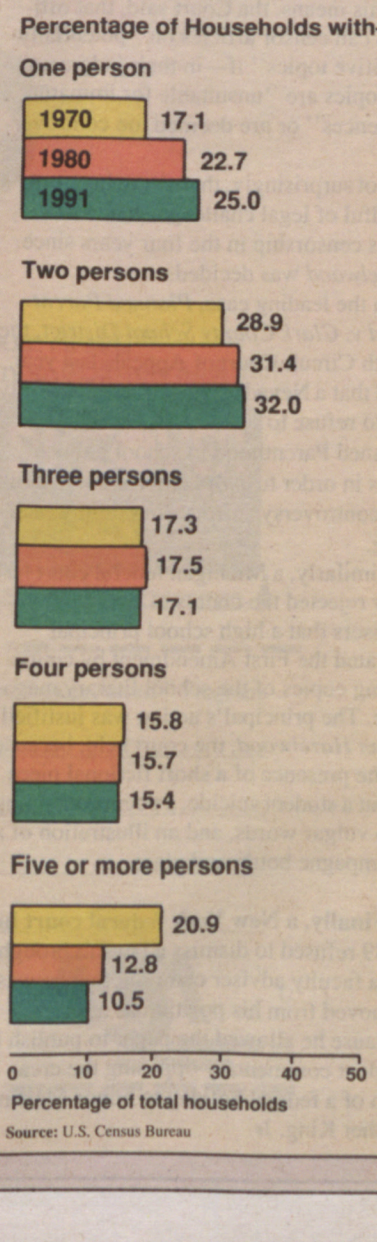
Even teens are feeling the effects of the recession. National Scholastic Surveys polled seniors in 56 public high schools in 37 states and found that:

50%	say their families have been affected by the recession
31%	see fewer movies
36%	are going on fewer family vacations
33%	know somebody who has lost a job because of the recession
26%	say the recession affects their choice of colleges
22%	are applying for financial aid they would not need if it weren't for the recession
11%	won't go to college at all as a result of the recession
66%	aren't learning about the recession in school
50%	have no understanding of economic issues and what has caused the recession
7%	have a parent out of work due to the recession

Source: National Scholastic Surveys

Shrinking Households

Fewer children per family, more single-parent families, and the emergence of nonfamily households equals shrinking traditional households (two parents, two children). Only 34 percent of households in 1991 had at least one member under age 18.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

LOOKING AHEAD TO RETIREMENT

RETIREES

Make the Difference

In many areas of the country, the 1992 election year is becoming known as 'The Year of NEA-Retired.'

Never before have so many NEA-R state affiliates and local chapters been so actively involved in supporting public education through political action.

One place where NEA-Retired members are making a difference is Nevada's Washoe County, where retirees' vigorous support played no small role in passage of a $155 million bond issue to build eight new schools and upgrade the rest.

"Their help was invaluable," says Washoe County Teachers Association (WCTA) President Elaine Lancaster. "They made a commitment to the Association and the PTA to work the entire week before the primary, walking the bond door-to-door—and they did."

Why would Retired members support a bond issue for renovating schools in which they no longer work?

"We devoted many years to education," says Martha Coon, a WCTA-Retired member who began teaching in 1936. "Why wouldn't we be excited to improve something we helped build?"

Toni Pennington, who retired last year after 30 years primary teaching, has seen crayons melt in buildings that lack air conditioning. "Conditions like that just aren't fair to the children," she says.

Pennington tells voters good schools benefit everyone, not just children and teachers. "The first thing a corporation asks about when relocating is the schools. If you're not tops, forget it."

Ken Haller, a WCTA-R member and local political activist, says it's taken a lot of effort to get past the anti-tax sentiments of the county's large retiree population.

"Some don't appreciate the difference between a bond issue and an outright tax increase," he explains. "Also, some think the money is going to salary increases."

Some of Washoe County's new bond money is earmarked to put a complete computer lab in every school and a computer in every classroom. Much of the equipment is outdated in schools that do have some type of computer lab.

"Time and time again, Retired members tell me we must get our kids on-line and technologically literate if America is going to compete globally," says WCTA President Lancaster. "They know that education isn't a 'my kid versus your kid' thing. It's about our country's future."

By backing the bond issue, WCTA-R was also thanking the Washoe County Teachers Association for past support.

"Washoe County teachers backed us 100 percent in our dispute with the district over health care benefits for retirees. This was the best way to repay them," says WCTA-R President Marian Conrad.

What makes the efforts of the 87-member WCTA-R chapter even more remarkable is the fact that it was organized less than a year ago.

"I wanted to do more than just go to a tea every other month," explains Conrad, when asked why she didn't join some other retired organization. "The best way to ensure our voice being heard was to get involved in the political arena."

WCTA-R members are actively involved in the upcoming November elections, campaigning vigorously for endorsed candidates at every level of government, including school board. They're working in campaign headquarters, going door-to-door, and planning to drive vans in election day get-out-the-vote efforts.

One of the candidates retirees support is incumbent U.S. Senator Harry Reid.

"School employees are among the most dedicated and inspirational persons I've ever met," says Reid. "Why should their commitment and leadership end after retirement? The Washoe County Retired members are younger in spirit than many half their age."

Another place where NEA-R members are making a big impact for the very first time is in Delaware.

"The past five years were for building," says Jack Kinnaman, president of Delaware State Education Association-Retired. "Now we're organized enough to get involved politically."

Kinnaman has been pleased with the steady growth of DSEA-R membership, which stands today at about 600. This year, for the first time, DSEA-R is soliciting PAC contributions from its members, as well as supplying volunteers for such traditional campaign activities as staffing telephone banks, posting yard signs, and stuffing envelopes.

A DSEA-R coordinator acts as liaison between each county's Retired chapter and DSEA. As candidates are added to the Association's list of endorsements, these coordinators work to line up volunteers.

Part of the push for political action among Delaware Retired members comes from ongoing frustrations in dealing with the state legislature over pension and fringe benefit issues. Delaware state retirees enjoy no automatic pension benefit increases of any kind. Even cost of living adjustments must come through the legislature, so every change is political.

"We want to put in office people who will be more supportive of retired state employees," says Kinnaman. "We lobby year-round, not just at election time."

"I was always very active in the Association," says Al Carey, DSEA-R member and chair of the Legislative Committee. "When I retired, I thought I was finished with all this. But I learned that you only get what you work for. It's important that we all do our share. As soon as you stop, you're out of luck."

Carey points out that DSEA-R's efforts don't just benefit educators. All state retirees, many of whom don't have organizations of their own, benefit.

"These Retired members are a tremendous asset to DSEA," says UniServ Director Beverly Corelle. "They're full of experience. They've seen what the Association has done for them, and they know how to work the system. Their support in this year's elections is really cementing their ties to DSEA."

For information on how you can get politically involved, contact your state or local Retired affiliate.

Photographs by Roger Warren

NEA-Retired member B. J. West (top photo) is one retired teacher politically involved in education issues in Washoe County, Nevada. Inset: WCTA-Retired President Marian Conrad (left) plans strategy with members Toni Pennington and B. J. West. Bottom: WCTA-Retired members Ken Stick and Ursula Lorring discuss the bond issue.

A message about happy dreams from an NEA member.

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RESEARCH CLUES

A Shaky Foundation For Learning

"The efforts of schools are launched from the platform of readiness and support for learning, which are products of the home. A clear-eyed assessment of the family as school dictates a sobering conclusion that a large proportion of homes are not providing very high platforms for the schools to build on."

Education begins in the home, but a new study questions how much that beginning really helps most kids.

That's one of the main conclusions of a new study, *America's Smallest School: The Family*, conducted by the Educational Testing Service.

The ETS report makes its case by examining a number of large-scale surveys and measurement programs, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and ETS' own International Assessment of Educational Progress, which rated the United States and 14 other countries on educational trends.

By looking at conditions and practices in the home, the ETS report makes a strong case for focusing the education reform movement on families. Only after such a housecleaning, say ETS researchers, will education and education reform work at the classroom level.

The report's eight sections look at state, national, and often international data on the following topics:

- The parent-pupil ratio
- The home library
- Reading at home
- Watching television
- Homework
- Absence from school
- Parent involvement
- Family resources.

Parent-pupil ratio

"If parents are a critical factor in children's development," notes the report, "then whether a child has one parent or two at home should make a difference." That difference is increasingly important: the percentage of children under age 18 living with a single parent has more than doubled since 1965.

In fact, says the report, students with two parents in the home score considerably higher on achievement tests than those with one parent. For example, students living with both parents tended to score higher on the NAEP math proficiency tests.

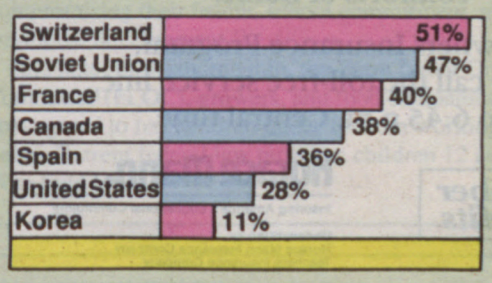
According to the report, the difference narrows greatly—but remains—after analysts take into consideration that single-parent families, on average, have lower income and less education.

Again, states having a larger proportion of students with both parents at home tend to have higher average math scores, says the report.

State by state, the percentage of eighth grade students with both parents at home ranges from 85 percent in Wyoming, North Dakota, and Nebraska to 47 percent in the District of Columbia.

Reading at Home

Percentage of Students Who Read for Fun Almost Every Day, 1991.



Students who do more reading at home are better readers, says the report, citing the 1990 NAEP reading assessment. For instance, 13-year-olds who read at home daily scored higher than those who did so weekly—and they, in turn, scored higher than those who read less often. States whose students report more reading also have higher mathematics scores.

Two discouraging trends: Students do less reading for fun as they get older. And students read fewer books, newspapers, and magazines in 1990 than in 1984.

The Impact Of Family Life On How Students Learn

A Summary of Findings By the Educational Testing Service

Chart information from *America's Smallest School: The Family*, Policy Information Report, Policy Information Center, Educational Testing Service, 1992.

The Home Library

The presence of books, encyclopedias, magazines, and newspapers in the home is an indication both of what a young person has available to read and of the importance the parents assign to reading, say ETS researchers.

An abundance of reading materials further shows that parents not only want reading materials, but have the money to buy them. Unfortunately, the number of reading materials in the home has declined over the last two decades.

In the NAEP assessments, achievement in school is consistently related to the number of reading materials in the home. In states where average homes have more reading materials, students generally have higher proficiency.

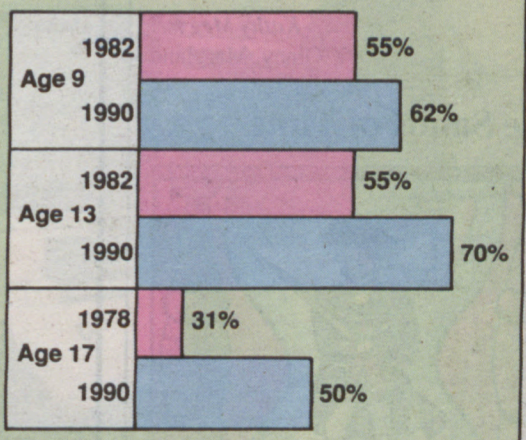
The more different types of reading materials there are in the home, the higher students score in reading at all three age levels tested by the NAEP.

Watching Television

"There is a close association between the amount of television watched and academic proficiency," says the report—but the relationship's a negative one. Among the states, the proportion of eighth graders who watch six or more hours each day ranges from 33 percent in the District of Columbia to 6 percent in North Dakota. Those states appear at the opposite ends of the spectrum in academic achievement.

Internationally, the U.S. ranks second in the percentage of 13-year-olds watching five hours or more of television every day—and second from the bottom in mathematics proficiency.

Trends in the Percentage of Students Watching Three or More Hours of TV per Day.



Parent Involvement

According to the report, eight out of every ten parents of eighth graders talk with their children about their current school experiences, and half talk about the youngster's future school plans.

According to the report, one-third of parents of eighth graders belong to a PTA and have contacted the school about their child's academic work.

In Brief

The report also examines homework, school absences, and family resources. The first two categories offer no surprises: States where students have fewer absences tend to have higher math scores, for example, and the more homework a student does, the better that student's academic achievement.

In the area of family resources, the results are disheartening. Family income has stagnated since 1970, and the percentage of children in poverty has risen—both trends that influence the other measures.

If the schools are to move forward, concludes the report, "change must occur in the pervasive attitude of American society—and this change must begin with the family. National educational goals for the year 2000 will be difficult to attain without educational reform in the home as well as the school."

For the complete report, send $5.50 (includes s&h) to ETS Policy Information Center 04-R, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541-0001.

—Anita Merina

IDEA EXCHANGE

Different, Yet the Same

After my high school English students read the novel *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel—about the adventures of two teens and an elderly man—I ask each to write about a personal relationship with an older person.

Student responses are usually so sensitive, insightful, coherent, and emotional that I try to share them with the public—particularly senior citizens—by sending them to local newspapers and magazines. As part of our submissions, I invite older readers to write a tribute to a teenager who's affected their lives.

Senior citizens usually respond enthusiastically, often recalling stories they hadn't thought of in years. They say they're glad that others cared enough to perceive the strength, grace, and dignity that comes with age.

My students and I have found that a relationship that starts with a written activity often evolves into a long friendship.

Kathy Megyeri
Olney, Maryland

The Sands of Time

One way I stimulate interest in my llth and 12th grade American history classes is to have my students recreate historic battles in a 4-foot square sandbox.

I assign a particular battle to three or four students. They conduct the research and then present the battle to the class, placing plastic soldiers and other props at the appropriate places in six inches of sand.

Another project my students enjoy is keeping individual journals as characters in American history. All journals start with the early North American colonial dateline "1609, Jamestown, Virginia"—and the kids create the characters whose identities they take on.

As the characters, the students make weekly entries, summarizing what's happened in their lives.

Gary Horton
Independence, Virginia

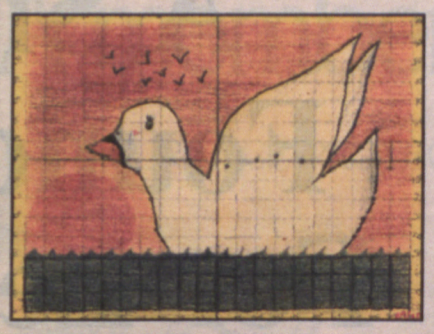
Where Are We Now?

Many of my seventh grade students have trouble understanding latitude and longitude, an important part of any map study unit. So I assign them a current events project that involves finding the latitude and longitude of sites in the news.

The students get practice in using an atlas as well as locating and learning about countries. They also hone their language skills by writing sentences that summarize their findings.

For a fun conclusion to the map unit, my students work out an assignment involving appropriate terms (Mercator, grid, parallel, etc.), directions, and points of latitude and longitude.

The kids think they're making a map of an existing land form until they realize they're actually plotting points in the shape of a duck! Once they complete the duck, they can decorate it any way they choose (sample at left).



Marjorie Mischley
Alpena, Michigan

*Send your ideas—simple yet clever suggestions any educator could adopt with little effort—to Idea Exchange, **NEA Today**, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Important: please include the name of your local Association and school, subject or grade taught, and home and school phone numbers.*

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Looking Back

An update on stories from previous issues

Child Labor: Another Look

There's some good news about child labor laws, a topic *NEA Today* covered in a Page 3 story last May. Washington State legislators have passed the toughest child labor laws in the country. The regulations restrict teenagers aged 16 and 17 to 20-hour work weeks during the school year, while those 14 and 15 will be allowed to work just 15 hours a week.

The legislation also bans minors from working on scaffolds or windowsills or in freezers or meat coolers, and from "all work preparing meats for sale."

After a three-year study of the issue, a special labor committee reported to the legislature that students who work more than 20 hours per week during the school year are at risk of failing to attain even "rudimentary levels of English, math, and reading."

The Washington State Pediatric Association endorsed the study, noting: "When teenagers work, they risk compromising their health, school commitment, and emotional development."

End note: In northern Ohio, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), growers, and food companies have now agreed to bar children under 14 from working in the fields. Current federal law prohibits children 12 and under from field labor.

Counting Out Computers

An April 1991 *NEA Today* story asked the question: "Does Your School Have Enough Computers?" A blistering new report in the September issue of *MACWORLD* magazine answers that question and a whole lot more.

The magazine, published by Apple primarily for users of its MacIntosh computers, examines America's record on using personal computers in primary and secondary schools. The conclusion? At present, conditions constitute a "national embarrassment."

"Our overall record on computer implementation in schools," notes the magazine, "is perhaps appropriately compared to the mismanagement of savings and loans associations over the last decade."

The magazine notes that "unknown hundreds of millions of dollars spent over the last decade have provided little return," and describes many schools with antiquated computers, unused computers, and schools and teachers unprepared to use the technology.

According to *MACWORLD* editors, the nation needs to put forth a comprehensive agenda for technology in schools with "adequate planning and effective implementation" to march into the future. Without the plan and the action, children will be ill-equipped to compete in a global economy in which computer skills are required.

The article's harsh assessments only confirm what many NEA members have been saying for years: technology in and of itself is not useful in schools without proper training and support.

Joe Di Dio

Short Takes

Last April *NEA Today* ran a Human Rights story on censorship of an instructional game. Now People for the American Way says censorship of school materials has reached a 10-year high. Attempts to ban or otherwise restrict certain books and curricular materials have soared by 50 percent since the 1990-91 school year. John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* led the list of banned books. . . Opponents of tracking students, a practice *NEA Today* reported on in December 1990, have new evidence to cite. The largest-ever multiyear study of academic tracking concludes that ability grouping worsens the prospects of low-achieving students while doing nothing to improve those of high-achieving students. The study, released by Johns Hopkins University researchers Robert Slavin and Jomills Henry Braddock II, also cites tracking's negative effect on race relations. . . *NEA Today's* April 1992 "zero" to the Meriden, Connecticut, school board for rejecting a $30,000 state grant to fund a free-breakfast program for needy grade-schoolers seems even more appropriate now. The board has since voted twice more to reject federal or state grants to run a free breakfast program.

Where There's Smoke . . .

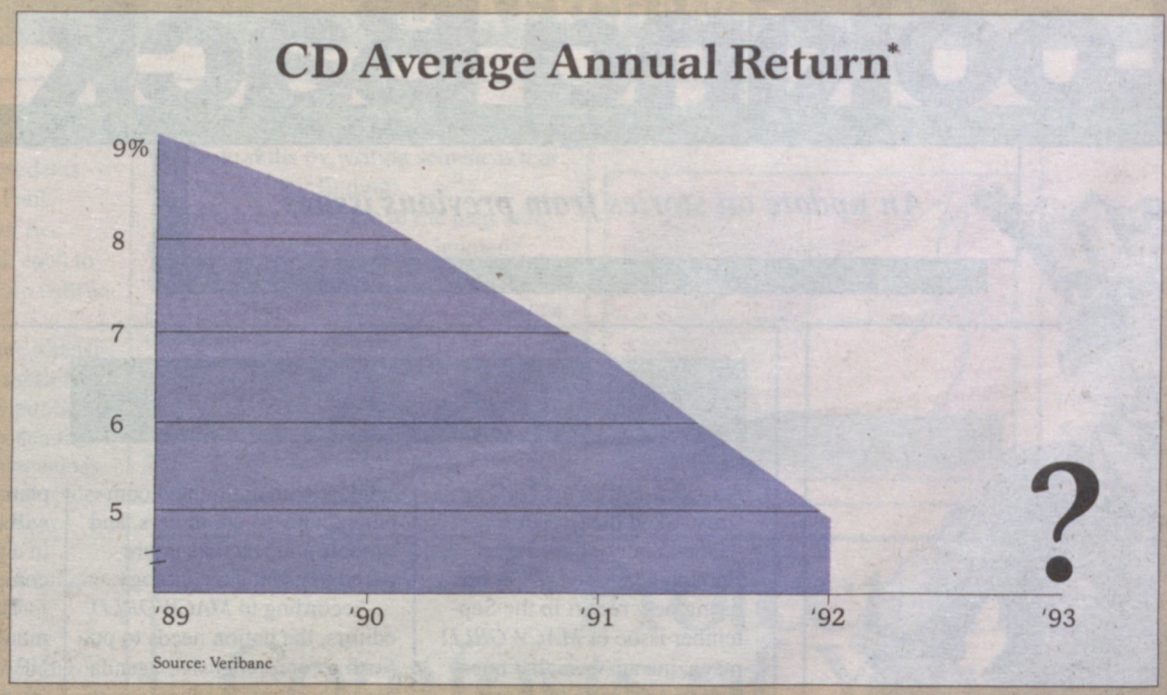
Here's more to add to the information on mothers who smoke reported in *NEA Today's* March 1992 interview with pediatrician Gerald Merenstein, chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on the Fetus and Newborn.

Findings from a new study published in *Pediatrics* magazine suggest that mothers who quit smoking during pregnancy but resume their habit afterwards haven't done their kids any big favors.

Researchers at the University of Rochester School of Medicine found that kids of these mothers were just as much at risk as kids of mothers who didn't stop smoking during pregnancy.

The study apparently confirms the negative link between maternal smoking and behavioral problems in children, a relationship no other study to date has made, says Michael Weitzman, associate chair of pediatrics at Rochester's School of Medicine.

Says Weitzman: "A boy born weighing less than 3.3 pounds to a mother who smokes at least a pack a day was eight times more likely to show extreme behavior problems than a normal-weight boy of a nonsmoking mother." That ratio increases to 19 times if the boy has asthma.



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Your NEA

Q & A

About Committees

What do NEA's committees do?
An NEA committee advises governing bodies like the Representative Assembly, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee about policies or program activities. A committee recommendation is carried out only when the governing body has approved it.

How are members chosen?
Candidates for most committees are recommended by NEA state and local affiliates and by bodies representing ethnic groups and women in the Association.

The NEA President—with the advice and consent of the Board—makes the final appointments. A governing body elects the members of some committees.

Most committees have nine members, but some are larger—the Resolutions Committee has 150.

What types of committees are there?
Special committees mandated by a governing body; internal committees of the Board of Directors; standing committees of the Representative Assembly; and program-related committees.

Which committees are most evident to NEA members?
The Resolutions Committee and the Committee on Program and Budget. Each year their reports are submitted to the Representative Assembly. Approved resolutions become the Association's policy base. The budget as approved takes effect for the next year.

Most other committees report to the Board of Directors; their recommendations, as adopted, are assigned for implementation.

What are the program-related committees?
They parallel the administrative structure of the NEA—for example, dealing with Affiliate Relations, Member Benefits, Higher Education, and Human Relations.

What are the most interesting tasks committees have handled recently?
An example is the work of the Special Committee on Urban Education, set up by the 1991 Representative Assembly. It recommended initiatives to involve the community; creation of a clearinghouse for urban education initiatives; increased involvement of local affiliates in the life of urban communities; and more training for urban Association leaders.

SPEAKING OUT ON THE ISSUES

Taking the Lead on AIDS Education

Like many other diseases that affect Americans today, AIDS is an affliction that can best be treated with education. And NEA's Health Information Network (HIN) has taken on the challenge of providing that education to Association leaders and staff.

Over the past four years, HIN has waged an aggressive campaign to train the Association's UniServ staff nationwide about the effects on schools of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) epidemic. A follow-up effort aims to teach NEA members about ways they can provide effective leadership in preventing the spread of HIV.

Most recently, HIN has released a thought-provoking 15-minute video, *Considering Condoms,* which dramatizes the importance of using condoms or practicing abstinence. The fast-paced production presents a diverse group of high school students sharing their feelings, experiences, and choices regarding sexual pressures and activity. Teens talk openly to teens in a way that students can relate to and learn from.

Intended for use as part of a larger, comprehensive sexuality education program, the package is designed to help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need for discussing and negotiating either sexual abstinence or consistent use of latex condoms.

The video features state-of-the-art graphics and special effects to appeal to today's teens and provides specific instructions on proper condom use. A free teacher's discussion guide accompanies the video.

Funding for the video project was provided by Carter-Wallace, maker of Trojan brand condoms.

To order a copy of *Considering Condoms* and the curriculum guide, send $15 to NEA Video Library, P.O. Box 509, Westhaven, CT 06516 or call 203/934-2669 with your VISA or MasterCard orders. Make checks payable to the National Education Association. Please allow three weeks for delivery.

IN HISTORY

Created in 1946, NEA's Teacher Education and Professional Standards Commission took its watchword from *NEA Journal* Editor Joy Elmer Morgan: "It is not possible for society to guarantee to every child a devoted mother and a wise, provident father, but society can guarantee to every child a competent, well-prepared, and adequately paid teacher."

From 1946 to 1955, the standards that prospective teachers needed to meet rose dramatically. In 1946, only 15 states required a college degree for elementary school teachers; by 1955, 35 had established that standard.

During the same era, Association membership more than doubled. In 1946, 340,000 teachers belonged to NEA; in 1957, the number exceeded 700,000.

WORKING FOR YOU

In the Know on Certification

By now you've probably heard about the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. That's the body that is establishing standards that teachers will need to meet in order to receive national certification.

Susan Carmon is the NEA staffer who's working as the liaison between NEA and the National Board, a job that always seems to be changing as the Board continues its work.

Currently, Carmon is helping create a network of Association leaders and staff to work with the National Board's Field Testing Network (FTN), currently in the planning stages.

The $7.1 million FTN will give teachers the opportunity to try out assessments designed to measure what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do to receive National Board certification.

Some 7 percent of the nation's teachers will also help field-test the operation of the certification system itself.

Carmon's goals: to enhance teacher influence over the development of national certification and to ensure that NEA members are among the first teachers to become Board-certified in 1994.

Another part of her job involves helping NEA's state and local affiliates become leaders in the school restructuring movement and advance teacher empowerment.

"My ultimate goal is to help more and more NEA members become change agents in school reform," explains Carmon.

"Meaningful school improvement requires nothing less than the full involvement of our members everywhere."

A COMPENDIUM OF INFORMATION ABOUT NEA ACTIVITIES

NEA President Keith Geiger denounced the state of children's television at a joint press conference with the Center for Media Education at the National Press Club this fall. "We all must work to ensure that those we entrust with this grand new toy we call television don't become so obsessed with creating a generation of consumers that they shirk their responsibility to help us nurture a new generation of learners and leaders," he said. . . **Zulema Enterprises,** publishers of *The Black College Career Guide* to historic and predominantly Black colleges, will donate $2 to NEA's Mary Hatwood Futrell Scholarship Fund for every copy of the guide bought by NEA members. The Fund supports promising Black college students. To get your copy—and prompt the resulting donation—send a check for $8.95 (includes postage) to Zulema Enterprises, NEA-BCCG, 108 Wm. Howard Taft Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45219. . . **The Economics of Education** is the topic of an NEA National Conference set for March 12-14 in San Diego, California. The conference will bring together resource people with expertise in the field of school finance, taxation, and public policy . . . **Next in the series is the** NEA Conference on School Restructuring scheduled for April 2-4 in Tampa, Florida. The conference will examine changing educational environments as well as the changing role of NEA.

BOOK BEAT

The Coach As Hero

A remarkable story about a coach who produces winning football teams. Enough said?

Kevin Horrigan, a St. Louis journalist and radio broadcaster, tackles two subjects in *The Right Kind of Heroes: Coach Bob Shannon and the East St. Louis Flyers.* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. 334 pp. $18.95.) First, Bob Shannon, coach of the champion East St. Louis Flyers high school football team; and second, the corrupt, decrepit city of East St. Louis, Illinois, the improbable environment from which his winning teams have sprung.

In 16 seasons (1976-91), Shannon took his team eight times to the Illinois state championship and won six state titles. Four times, *The Sporting News* named him High School Coach of the Year. At one point, he had won 44 straight games, was featured in *USA Today, People,* and *Reader's Digest,* and was interviewed on *60 Minutes.*

In contrast, the statistics for East St. Louis include enormous city debt, a crime rate that's one of the nation's highest, and a public assistance rate said to amount to 70 percent of the population.

The problems in the East St. Louis school system—and its athletic programs—parallel those of the city. The weed-infested playing field, the lack of funds, the poor planning for athletic events, and the interference from the administration all drive Shannon, his assistant coaches, and others crazy.

A fierce rivalry with the other city high school over allocated funds is a sore political point with Shannon, as are the politics practiced in East St. Louis.

The Flyers practice in hand-me-down uniforms, bring their own toilet paper to practice, shower at home, and are forced to keep constant tabs on their possessions. Theft is rampant; drugs are a serious problem with students and some staff. Yet the principals and central administration don't make any changes.

Worse in a way, few East St. Louis students even come to the Flyers' home games. When the Voice of America comes to interview Shannon, Horrigan reports that the East St. Louis Flyers "will be news in Budapest," but they can't draw a crowd to their home field.

How then does Bob Shannon bring off his team's superb accomplishments? Horrigan shows how by following Shannon through the 1990 and 1991 football seasons.

The keys to Coach Shannon's success are discipline and near-total control of the human aspects of his environment. Take this example: Shannon wants only "the right kind of kids" on his team. Kids who have the wrong friends, who aren't diligent in getting good grades, attending practice, working out in the off-season—who lack "commitment"—take themselves off the team, Shannon says.

Aware that many students have no interest in improving their life situation, Shannon says: "'The only thing you can do is do the best you can, be the type of person you're telling them to be. I'm just trying to get them to figure out they don't have to settle for what's out there on the streets."

But as I read about Shannon's magnificent victories—this question seems to me to be up for grabs: Is Shannon's program more important to him than the individuals around him?

From the evidence Horrigan supplies of the 1991 season, Shannon becomes angry and sarcastic with players as the season progresses. He breaks many of his own rules, including playing a highly talented slacker who doesn't fit his "right-kind-of-kid" model. Of course the team wins another state championship, and the slacker stops slacking off.

Perhaps the answer is that for a coach, individual players exist primarily as members of a team, not as independent entities. Still I see little evidence of human connection between him and individual players. There is only concentration on football 24 hours a day.

—Reviewed by James Hugh Comey

Comey teaches language arts in the Wallingford-Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, school district outside Philadelphia, and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Pennsylvania.

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NEW WAVE

Ameritech

Could This Be High-Tech Heaven?

A computer network links 75 students and their teachers in their homes. They're also plugged into the school library and national databases.

After dinner, Bryan finishes composing the second draft of his outline on his computer.

"Is this any better?" he types.

"Much better," his teacher answers through her home computer, "but here are some other ideas."

The next morning his outline will be waiting on the teacher's desk—in her computer—when she gets to school.

This isn't a dream—it's happening now, in a communications project in six suburban Chicago school districts.

The project, a two-year pilot program now in its second year, is sponsored by IBM, Ameritech, and the districts themselves. IBM, which provided the computers, chose the schools on the basis of the ideas they proposed for connecting 75 kids at home with their teachers and information sources.

Here's how the project works at one of the six, Winnetka's New Trier High.

Teachers and administrators at New Trier decided to carry out their project for a year, with sophomores of average ability who'd signed up for the four core courses the program covers—biology, geography, English, and geometry. The courses were integrated and offered in a 3-hour and 20-minute time block. When 131 students applied, the planners held a lottery to select the 75 participants.

The 1991-92 participants at New Trier made a contract with the school: if they passed all four core courses, they could keep the computer, monitor, printer, and mouse. Seventy of them made it.

Amy Happ was one of those students. Before this project, her only experience using a computer had been doing a little word processing on a computer at school. Having a computer at home (her reason for signing up for the project) was an exciting yet scary prospect.

"I had no idea what to expect," says Amy, now in her junior year. "I've learned a lot about computers, and now if I get into trouble with one, I can think of ways to solve my problem."

Having a computer at home changed the way Amy did homework.

"We could send messages and get help from our teacher or our friends," she says. (She still keeps in touch electronically with her former teachers.) "And the software was like having a huge card catalog and library in your home. You can do everything at home."

Students and teachers alike found that they become more innovative when they have a computer and access to new software packages.

"The computer offers students another technique for learning," says NEA member Ann Cradock.

Keeping a notebook, for instance, takes on a whole new meaning. In Cradock's Shakespeare class, students select a character from the play they're studying. They use their computer to "search" library files for a drawing of the character and a quotation from the play. Then they can "import" an electronic copy of both the drawing and the quotation into their computer file.

Students use the drawing software to illustrate what the quotation means to them. When they print out their file, they have a notebook complete with illustrations.

"The added curriculum of the computer itself is a huge bonus for these kids," sums up geometry teacher Alfred Estberg. "They'll carry what they've learned wherever they go."

The project doesn't neglect the students' families. "Every Monday we send parents an electronic letter," says Cradock. "It tells them their child's assignments for the week and due dates for upcoming tests and papers." Parents can also access their child's grades.

If what's going on in New Trier is really the present, what will the future hold? Look for increased use of video conferencing lessons by experts (for example, an anatomy lesson from a college professor), joint lessons from educators in different parts of the country, interactive simulation software that allows students to practice a skill and get feedback, more software for younger students, and a system for locating and contacting a substitute teacher (see Trends, p. 19).

The computers won't all be academic. For school bus fleets, a tracking system will tally the number of children boarding or leaving each bus, track bus locations, and send distress signals when there's a problem.

—Karen Zauber

IDEA EXCHANGE

Get Practical

My developmentally handicapped students gain practical work experience by performing chores for senior citizens with limited mobility.

Our local fire department—which checks on 45 elderly people daily by phone—provided us with names. We sent a survey to each, offering our services in helping them care for their homes and yards. Sixteen accepted.

Once or twice a week, I lead anywhere from four to 12 of my ninth through 12th graders into the homes. We clean everything from attics to windows to yards, we paint, and we move things—all under the direction and watchful eye of the owner.

Not only do my students learn to listen and cooperate, they come to appreciate the wisdom and knowledge of their elders.

Billy Emerick
Troy High School
Troy, Ohio

German in the Gym

Most students in my district speak only English.

To acquaint my first through fifth grade physical education classes with other languages, I often use foreign words for things like counting off numbers and and identifying colors.

If I do this after the children become familiar with the procedures, they catch on quickly and enjoy the new twist to a familiar situation. They're always eager to help one another, and are usually amazed at how many words they remember.

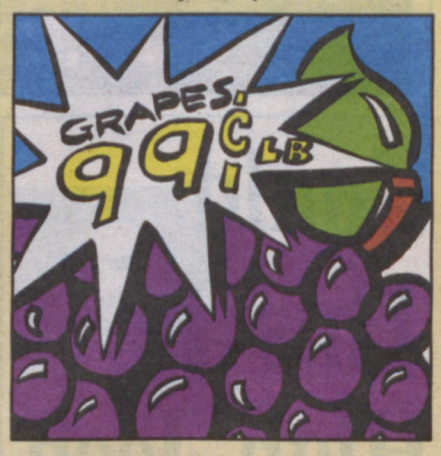
I start by using words in Spanish. Once the kids master those words, I move on to French and German. It's a game that challenges and stimulates the students, and I enjoy it, too.

Jean See
Sawano, Wisconsin

Grocery Ads Add Up

My kindergarten students enjoy learning letters and numbers as we play the Newspaper Game.

This is the way it works: I clip a supermarket ad from the local newspaper and display it for all to see as we sit in a circle on the carpet. Any child who can



identify a letter gets to circle it with a crayon. We go around the room until everyone has a turn.

The numbers game is played the same way.

The pictures of the food help the kids learn in other ways. I'll ask a child to name aloud the particular food and to give the beginning sound of the word.

I conduct these activities several times during the second semester, after the children have learned something about letters and numbers.

Finally, I encourage parents to clip grocery ads at home and reinforce what the kids have learned in class.

Ruth Stevens
Woolard Elementary School
Manchester, Ohio

Just a Phone Call Away

I reach out to my foreign language students' parents as soon as the school year starts, by phoning them.

I explain my expectations, verify that the students have proper study materials, and answer any questions. I tell the students that I'll be calling their homes, and that if they do have the proper study materials when I call, they'll earn an *A* to be averaged in with their test scores.

During my calls, I also invite the parents to attend Back-To-School night and sit in on one of our classes. When they come in, I ask them and their child to sign a contract that spells out their rights and responsibilities.

With few exceptions, parents appreciate these efforts.

Steve Sonntag
Manteca High School
Manteca, California

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DATA BANK

Standard Support

A survey of 1,306 adults shows that the public still supports using standardized national tests for evaluation and remediation of student performance. Here's what they favor:

71% Favor requiring the use of standardized national tests

Favor using the results to:

65% rank the local public schools in terms of student achievement

60% determine if a student advances to the next grade level

38% determine how much teachers should be paid

36% determine the level of funding each local school should receive

79% identify areas in which teachers need to improve their teaching skills

85% identify areas in which students need extra help

Source: 24th Annual Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll

Making the Grade

In a Louis Harris poll of 1,250 adults conducted in August 1992, those surveyed were asked to rank reasons for current problems in the public school system from Very serious to Not sure.

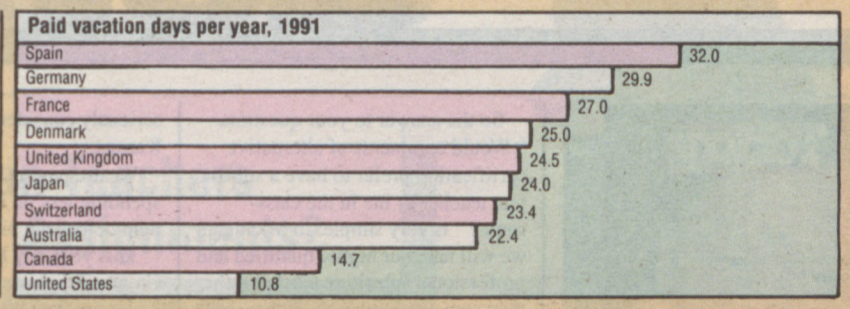
	Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not very serious	Not a problem	Not sure
A lack of parental involvement with children's education	56%	26%	9%	6%	3%
A shortage of teachers	37%	23%	18%	18%	4%
An insufficiently challenging curriculum	33%	31%	16%	13%	7%
Too many administrative rules governing individual schools	25%	37%	22%	9%	7%
A lack of up-to-date computers and equipment	24%	30%	24%	16%	6%
A short school year	18%	24%	25%	28%	5%

Source: Louis Harris & Associates Inc. for *Business Week*.

Last in Paid Vacation

Last year Americans had about 11 paid vacation days. Spain had nearly three times that. In fact, among major industrial nations, the United States is last when it comes to paid vacation days. Ten of the countries stack up like this:

Source: Union Bank of Switzerland, *Prices and Earnings Around the Globe, 1991* (Zurich: UBS, 1991), p.8.



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D.W., Norman, OK

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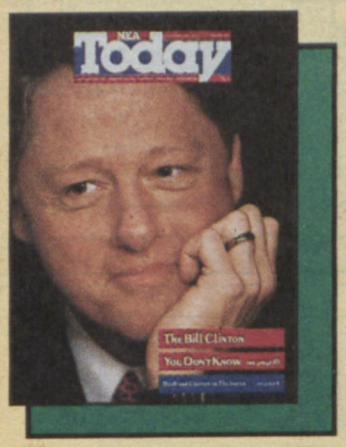

'I Am...'

I am female.
I am married.
I have 2 children and plan to have more.
I am 27 years old.
I hold a master's degree.
I have 6 years of work experience.
I am a Republican.
I am an American Teacher who pays union dues.
Where do I fit in with the NEA?
Sometimes I wonder...

Lane Adams
San Diego, California

Con and Pro

I'd like to direct my comments to Wanda Troutman who took the *yes* side of the debate, "Can Someone Learn to Teach in Eight Weeks?" (September). On behalf of all Michigan substitute teachers, Ms. Troutman, we want you to know that we take exception to your statement: "Would opponents of alternative certification prefer to have a substitute teacher—often little more than a babysitter—rather than me in the classroom?" Substitute teachers aren't babysitters.

I repeat, we aren't babysitters. We are professional educators who provide students with continuing education in the absence of you, the classroom teacher. Except in rare emergency situations, substitute teachers in our state have a minimum of 120 semester hours of college credit in a teacher preparation program.

A majority of the 10,000-plus subs in our state have at least one degree, a teaching certificate, experience as a classroom teacher or long-serving sub, and a strong desire to serve the educational community in the unique role of a substitute teacher.

If we do become babysitters, it is because teachers like yourself, districts like those in eastern North Carolina, and the educational community expect us to be just that. Set your expectations to the level of "guest" teacher, provide us with a few basic tools (seating charts, lesson plans, class schedules), support us in what we do, and I assure you that we can be the best thing that has happened to your students in a long time.

So the answer to your question, "Would opponents of alternative certification prefer to have a substitute teacher or me in the classroom?" is very simple. In Michigan, we will take our highly qualified and professional substitute teacher rather than someone with only eight weeks of teacher training.

Liz Sanders
Flint, Michigan

I had a fine young Teach for America intern—with a prestigious undergraduate degree—in my classroom in 1990, the first year of the program.

What a great experience having him was for both my students and me! He was enthusiastic, innovative, and knowledgeable. He went on to teach in a neighboring, needy district.

My school continues to participate in this high-pressure training program, and the young interns who go through it continue to be excellent and successful.

Remembering my own education classes, I hardly believe the Teach for America interns have missed anything. Far better that they know their subjects and then work closely under an experienced teacher in a real classroom.

Phyllis Fernandez
Glendale, California

Feeling Pain

I would like to address the "Painless Finance Reform" that you reported in StateSide (September).

I regret to say that the new Kansas school finance bill has been anything but painless for Southwestern Kansas.

There are nine counties that are seriously considering secession from Kansas.

We are paying more taxes and spending less on our own students than before the bill was passed.

This year, my local, The Grant County Teachers Association, which had more than 90 members, had a net loss of 30 members.

The people who quit cited KNEA's stand on the finance issue as their major reason.

Do all these things sound "painless"?

Karen Stinson
Ulysses, Kansas

Not 'Free Or'

Whoever compiles your "Free or Inexpensive" column must not be a classroom teacher on a teacher's salary.

Rarely is anything "free" listed, and when it is, there's usually a hefty fee for "postage & handling."

In the September issue, prices ranged from $4.50 to $20.55, with an average of $9.49. For whom is $20.55, or even $9.49, "inexpensive?"

Jeanne Hassenzahl
Piedmont, California

Ed note: "Free or Inexpensive" looks for items that are under $10. Of the eight items in September's multicultural listing, seven sold for under $10—at an average price of $6.93. The eighth item, which sold for $17.95 plus postage and (for Californians) sales tax, was a unique national guide to American Indian locations. The book wasn't inexpensive, but it did strike us as one that some teachers would find worth the price—and might not otherwise know about. Should we have left it off?

As for postage & handling charges, anyone who publishes books—whether a conglomerate or an educator self-publishing his or her own materials—has to cover costs for postage and handling. Some publishers incorporate this cost into the book price. Some list it separately.

There's no way to avoid paying p&h charges when you're buying materials published by an individual. However, there is a way to avoid them with major publishers: buy their books from local bookstores (many will place special orders for you) or through wholesalers. We list mail order buying information for major publishers solely for the convenience of people in a hurry.

Not a 'Panacea'!

I, too, was "surprised and a little chagrined" to see Kate VanHorn's September letter to the editor about your "Breaking Through" item (People, May) on facilitated communication for autistic children.

VanHorn's belief that facilitated communication is being "marketed through parents" is not borne out by my experience. Recently, I attended a workshop of about 500 people in the Minneapolis area. Nearly all those in attendance were speech and language clinicians, including the presenter.

What a joyless attitude VanHorn has about a practice that has worked for many more people than just the one boy whom the article describes.

She needs to educate herself further, and to develop respect for parents.

Barbara Sorensen
Washburn, Wisconsin

A Little Respect, Please

You're willing to defend the rights of women and promote multiculturalism. Are you equally willing to defend teachers when they're belittled in feature films and television programs?

Recently, I rented the video of *Little Man Tate*, which portrays an elementary public school teacher as incapable of tailoring advanced studies for the gifted child. Why did Jodi Foster decide to present the teacher in a way that downgrades the profession?

More important, why aren't you asking her why? And while you're at it, why don't you also ask the producers of *The Wonder Years* to portray teachers as sensitive, competent adults as opposed to monotone bores who read textbook sentences like robots?

Defend teachers or Hollywood will stereotype us as negatively as it did African Americans.

Donald Seaman
S. Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Not So Serious

I can't believe you gave a zero ("Heroes and Zeroes," September) to the Isuzu commercial in which a teacher admonishes her students to "color within the lines [because] the lines are our friends."

The commercial is funny and eye-catching—and obviously a gross caricature, though it probably hits too close to home for many of us.

As an instructor starting my 5th year teaching 5th grade, I know that humor is one of the most effective tools in the classroom. Let's remember that it's OK to poke fun at ourselves, and that with a couple of million of us out there, there are bound to be more than a few telling the students to "color within the lines."

Jason Tarshis
San Jose, California

Yes to Pelts

I must disagree with Judith Jacobson in her letter to the editor (September).

It takes little research to prove that wildlife, whether game species or not, flourishes today because of the dollars spent by hunters and trappers and the hours contributed by countless volunteers.

William Wolbert
Tionesta, Pennsylvania

What's your opinion? NEA members are cordially invited to use this page to exchange ideas with their colleagues around the nation. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. Address correspondence to "Letters," 1201 16th St., N. W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate

Should Veteran Teachers Get the Toughest Assignments?

YES

Californian Joe Desist is a resource specialist for the Fontana Unified School District, part-time college instructor, and state technical consultant for at-risk children. He chairs his county's Parenting Task Force/ Children's Network. He's also a candidate for the State Assembly.

NO

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Every year in teachers' lounges across this country, the question arises: Are old or new teachers better qualified to teach "problem" children? Teachers at all levels of experience discuss and take sides on the issue of who is best suited—or should be required—to teach children in trouble.

Here's a little story that gives a hint about my thinking on this question:

> Two athletes were sitting track-side at this year's Olympic games in Barcelona. One was a veteran of two previous Olympics, while his compatriot was new to the experiences of Olympic competition.
>
> As the two sat on a bench looking at a stadium full of sports fans and admirers, the younger man said to his new friend: "Why don't we sprint over to the crowd and say hello to a few of the people when we get there?"
>
> The older, more experienced athlete replied: "Son, why don't we just walk over and when we get there say hello to them all?"

My point is that experience does give its possessor a degree of insight and skill not readily available to the less experienced or less well educated. With experience you can operate with clarity of purpose and economy of action—characteristics not available to those who are new to a situation.

In teaching, there is and can be no substitute for experience. Schools of education teach theory, and even practice, in the abstract—unrooted in the reality of today's classroom. They don't offer courses specifically designed to meet the needs of the problem student, and almost none have actual classrooms where student teachers can learn how to deal with the problem child under the watchful and helpful gaze of a mentor.

As a result, most new teachers begin their careers without the direction that would give them the skills to deal effectively with this most challenging aspect of today's classroom. They learn to work with such students as they learn many other crucial lessons—from their own experience.

Much has been written of the benefits of experience; less, about when and how it should be acquired—particularly about how the novice teacher should gain experience in teaching problem students.

For most of us, the first year of teaching provided our first experience with a real live "problem student"—the youngster to whom life had dealt an unfair hand, in whom no amount of effort would bring about change. A child desperately in need and yet impossible to reach.

We put hours into evaluating how we related and responded to the needs of this child. We reinvented the wheel—with as much success as though (to change metaphors) we were trying to keep a snowball from melting in the Sahara.

As new teachers, most of us were out of our depth in confronting this challenge. We wondered whether perhaps there weren't someone better educated and suited to deal with the needs of this child than we were. Often there was—teaching in the classroom next door.

Common sense tells us it's experienced teachers who should deal with the problem child. Experienced teachers know what will and won't work in their approach to the child. They know what their system has to offer and how to get it.

But experienced teachers should also be asked to demonstrate to their junior colleagues who are new to the classroom how they make progress with their difficult students.

We face many obstacles in our effort to teach our children. We should approach the question of who should deal with problem children as simply the question of how we can best overcome one set of these obstacles.

One very important footnote: If experience entails additional responsibility, it should also bring additional privilege. Experienced teachers should work with problem students as a matter of responsibility; they should also enjoy the privilege of smaller class sizes for doing so.

Giving the veteran (or "best") teachers the problem students—a practice known as "stacking" class lists—is a terrible idea. It's a quick fix that has destructive repercussions schoolwide.

Proponents of the idea are maintaining—explicitly or by implication—that beginning teachers are less than whole teachers compared to their veteran colleagues. In fact, both new and veteran teachers have a lot to offer, even though their experience comes from different avenues.

The real reason administrators stack class lists is because it's their way of dealing—however inadequately—with so-called "incompetent teachers." Instead of helping such teachers learn to deal with the full range of student behavior, the administrators simply keep the most difficult students away from them.

As teachers we have a responsibility to colleagues at risk of being labeled incompetent. We must make sure that they get a chance to shed the label if it's inaccurate, or to be remediated if it's accurate.

What they don't need is for the rest of us to indulge in practices that isolate them without improving them.

But that's just what we do when we acquiesce in class stacking as the solution to the problem of weak teachers. Merely applying the dysfunctional label will not bring about a change in these teachers' behavior. As the saying goes: "If we fail to polish the rough stone, we'll never discover the gem inside."

Schools are like extended families. When one parent allows the other to shoulder all the burdens, the resulting disequilibrium in care-giving wears down the one positive force in the family. Home life deteriorates. The children suffer.

When such a disequilibrium occurs in a school as a result of shifting the worst students to the most senior teachers, both the children and our Association members suffer. School climate, which is a very important factor in achieving effective schools, deteriorates.

But the problems that lead to the disequilibrium aren't insoluble. In fact, they create an opportunity for the Association to show its true mettle.

My state Association, the New Jersey Education Association, encourages members to be alert to practices that can diminish members' rights or create dissension among them. Class list stacking does both those things.

There are better ways to handle the "weak" teacher problem. First, our building representatives must establish a climate of support—teacher helping teacher. Any member should feel comfortable enough to confide in a colleague and seek help—or to identify another's need for assistance.

We all know that a variety of situations can weaken our performance—misassignment, health problems, lack of experience, family problems, lack of administrative support—and burn-out from continually dealing with the problem children. That's what happens to the veteran teachers! We can get better at offering help when we see these forces at work.

Second, we must make sure the administration follows acceptable supervisory guidelines in bringing about change in teachers who are having difficulty. It's our job to be at the side of those teachers in the discussion, planning, and execution of the remediation process.

Finally, we must stop doing the administrators' job for them. We mustn't engage in explicit, ostracizing criticism of colleagues who have problems—nor in the more subtle criticism implied when we accept the practice of stacking class lists.

We must never be a party to the practice of telling the succeeding year's teacher that the reason he or she got the class full of behavior problems is because he or she is the "better teacher."

Baloney! I knew the "better teacher" label was a phoney the first time it was applied to me.

What we have to recognize is that in education, we learn by doing. And almost anyone—teachers included—has the right to be given the chance to learn and improve.

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